

HAMS

USA JOURNAL/Smithfield, Va.

Town is home to fabled ham

By Ben Beach
USA TODAY

For the USA's pigs, chances are one in 25 that they'll die in Smithfield, Va.

Smithfield (population 4,000) is the self-proclaimed Ham Capital of the World or Headquarters of Hindquarters.

The Cornbelt produces 80 percent of the USA's pork products, but this is the home of the world-renowned Smithfield ham, first marketed in the late 1700s by Capt. Mallory Todd.

A state law makes it illegal to label any ham a "genuine Smithfield ham" unless it is cured for at least six months within the town limits.

Particularly popular at Christmas, the hams are flowing out of town to supermarkets and mail-order customers willing to pay \$50 plus postage for a cooked 10-12-pounder from Gwaltney, one of four local packers.

"Our best advertising is word of mouth," says Alton Gwaltney, director of marketing for Smithfield Ham & Products Co.

Even so, the number of Smithfield hams sold has declined 50 percent over the past 20 years. The reasons: steep prices and salty taste. The genuine hams now account for less than 2 percent of the packers' revenues.

Though the hams date back to the days when the Indians showed colonists how to cure venison, the town originally was known as a shipping center because of Pagan Creek's deep water.

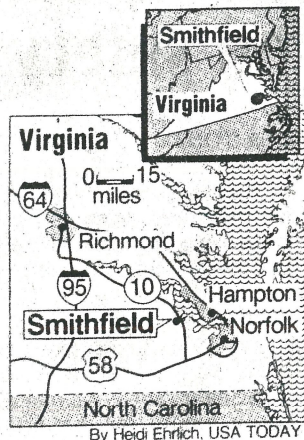
In the 1800s, Smithfield became known as the Peanut Capital of the World. But a 1921 fire destroyed the warehouses, and nearby rival Suffolk got a railroad link. So, P. D. Gwaltney, the Peanut King, decided to focus on pork.

Another turning point was



By Chip Mitchell

PORK BARON: Joseph Luter III, owner of the two biggest pork packers in Smithfield, Ham Capital of the World, stands in the packaging section of one of the plants.



the 1925 arrival of J. D. Spriggs, who purchased Smithfield Ham & Products Co. Spriggs traveled the land during the Depression selling Smithfield hams. He even put live pigs in restau-

rant windows.

"We dreamed up all kinds of stories about John Smith and Pocahontas and Smithfield hams," recalls Spriggs, 85. "History gets people interested."

On an average day, 80 nose-punishing, double-decker trucks with 180 pigs each rumble into town. Thanks to a bypass finished in 1978, downtown and the residential areas are spared.

Packers' Row, where 2,800 persons work, is not the only institution here. Identical twins Alice and Martha Whitley operate the Twins Olde Towne Inn, the morning gathering spot for many.

"You don't learn anything," says George Walls, a semi-retired insurance agent, "but you come any-

way, because you might miss something."

Across Pagan Creek to the east is a newer Smithfield, where fast-food outlets and a shopping center soon will be joined by housing for 1,200.

The town is close to Norfolk and Newport News, two commercial centers.

"Smithfield more and more is going to become a bedroom community," predicts Joseph Luter III, who owns the two largest packing houses.

But its identity is fixed.

At Little's Supermarket, two-thirds of the bacon section is devoted to local brands. High school teams are the Packers.

There are even bumper stickers asking "Have You Hugged A Pig Today?"

§ 3.1-867. Smithfield hams defined. — Genuine Smithfield hams are hereby defined to be hams processed, treated, smoked, aged, cured by the long-cure, dry salt method of cure and aged for a minimum period of six months; such six-month period to commence when the green pork cut is first introduced to dry salt, all such salting, processing, treating, smoking, curing and aging to be done within the corporate limits of the town of Smithfield, Virginia. (Code 1950, § 3-667; 1966, c. 702; 1968, c. 140.)

§ 3.1-868. Only genuine Smithfield hams to be labeled or advertised as such. — No person, firm or corporation shall knowingly, label, stamp, pack, advertise, sell, or offer for sale any ham, either wrapped or unwrapped, in a container or loose, as a genuine Smithfield ham unless such ham be a genuine Smithfield ham as defined in § 3.1-867. (Code 1950, § 3-668; 1966, c. 702; 1968, c. 140.)

§§ 3.1-869, 3.1-870: Repealed by Acts 1968, c. 140.

§ 3.1-871. Penalty for violation. — Any person, firm, corporation or association violating any of the provisions of this article shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, and upon conviction thereof, shall be punished by a fine of not less than \$25 nor more than \$300. (Code 1950, § 3-671; 1966, c. 702; 1968, c. 140.)

ARTICLE 2.

Inspection and Grading of Beef.

§§ 3.1-872 through 3.1-876: Repealed by Acts 1966, c. 598.

Editor's note. — The repealing act referred to §§ 3-672 through 3-676. Pursuant to Acts 1966, c. 717, it has been treated as repealing the corresponding sections in Title 3.1. See note under § 3.1-1.

ARTICLE 3.

State Meat Inspection Service.

§§ 3.1-877 through 3.1-884: Repealed by Acts 1966, c. 598.

Editor's note. — The repealing act referred to §§ 3-676.1 through 3-676.6. Pursuant to Acts 1966, c. 717, it has been treated as repealing the corresponding sections in Title 3.1. See note under § 3.1-1.

ARTICLE 4.

Virginia Meat and Poultry Products Inspection Act.

§§ 3.1-884.1 through 3.1-884.16: Repealed by Acts 1970, c. 290.

ARTICLE 4.1.

Virginia Meat and Poultry Products Inspection Act.

§ 3.1-884.17. Name of article. — This article may be cited as the "Virginia Meat and Poultry Products Inspection Act." (1970, c. 290.)

From: Code of Virginia

The Todd Family & The Smithfield Ham



Tazewell T. and Helen Todd Spratley and other members of the family on the porch of the Todd House on Wharf Hill, 1900.



The parlor at "The Hill" in 1900, when Victorian furniture was in style. The portrait over the mantle is Everard M. and Nancy Southall Todd's son, who died young. Courtesy of l'Ibert de Lacy Brayshaw.

Much has been written in newspapers and magazines about that delectable morsel, the Smithfield ham, but relatively little has been said about the man who originated the business of curing and shipping the product that has made the name of Smithfield famous all over the world.

From earliest days in the colony the settlers had prized the old razor-back hog and understood the art of curing hams and bacon as a prime source of good eating, and every farmer had a well-stocked smokehouse. But it remained for Captain Mallory Todd, a native of Bermuda and the progenitor of the Todd family of Smithfield and Norfolk, to establish the first curing and shipping business in the recently founded town of Smithfield, back in the middle of the eighteenth century.

Information gathered in Hamilton, Bermuda, indicates that members of the Todd family were freeholders of Southampton Parish, Bermuda, as early as the seventeenth century, apparently good solid citizens, although none of them seems to have held more exalted office than vestryman, constable, or member of the grand jury.

Mallory Todd, son of John and Angelina Perot Todd, was born in Southampton Parish, Bermuda, June 1, 1742, according to the Todd family Bible. His father, a mariner, died in 1755, and his will, dated March 26, 1748, was preserved by his descendants.

According to family tradition, Mallory Todd ran away from home at an early age, went to sea, and in time became the owner of vessels that traded with the American colonies. By the time he was twenty-five he had come to Smithfield and in 1767 was married to Angelina Mallory, daughter of Captain John Mallory, mariner of Isle of Wight County.

There is reason to believe the Mallory family also came from Bermuda and probably were relatives of the Todds. John Mallory was living in Isle of Wight as early as 1743.

Angelina Mallory Todd died in 1776, leaving four children, all of whom died young. In 1778 Mallory Todd took as his second wife Ann Robinson, daughter of John and Martha Moore Robinson of York County. They had twelve children.

Mallory Todd is known to have been in business in Smithfield as early as April 30, 1779, as proved by an invoice of that date for hams furnished Ellerston and John Perot in the island of St. Eustatius, West Indies. The trading vessel was the *Parnelia*, Francis Herbert, captain, and mentioned among other articles taken in exchange for hams were one two-pound cannon at thirteen pounds, six shillings, and one hat at five shillings, four pence.

Unlike some of the British merchants who had settled in Smithfield, Mallory Todd remained loyal to his adopted country during the Revolutionary War, and apparently used his sailing vessels to bring in arms and supplies for the embattled colonies. In the first Virginia Census of 1782, as head of a family, he listed six whites and twelve blacks. He owned considerable property in both town and county, but appears never to have held public office of any kind.

Lot 2, on which Todd made his home, was originally sold by Arthur Smith on October 5, 1752, to Nicholas Parker, cabinet-maker, for the usual price of four pounds, six shillings, indicating a vacant lot. Parker sold it in 1754 to William Williams, mariner, for one hundred pounds, so it would appear that Parker built the original part of the house in 1753. This is the west wing

of the present residence, which has a full English basement in which Todd is said to have carried on his business after he acquired the property. The first floor, of frame construction, consists of a hall and one room, with a dormer-windowed room above, which, many years later, was raised to a full two stories.

In 1786, Todd bought lot 1, lying between his residence and Pagan Creek, from the heirs of Joseph Bridger, and shortly thereafter annexed to the east end of his dwelling a large frame building of two stories, with full brick basement and an attic. This was, according to Dr. Purdie, one of the first two-story residences to be erected in Smithfield. It contains a wide hall from front to back, parallel to and adjoining the hall in the old part, and two large rooms to the right of the hall, with a stairway going up in the wall between the hall and back room. The living room is wainscotted to the height of the window sills, and there is a wide and elaborate cornice. The chimney front is handsomely paneled to the ceiling and ornamented with reeded pilasters.

The pediment of the front door in this "new" building is ornamented with "wine cups" and with the thirteen stars so popular in the Federal period, representing the original thirteen states of the infant Republic. The small, covered porch at the old front door was extended to form a high, uncovered, deck-like porch across the entire front, from which there is a fine view over the roof-tops of the buildings at the foot of Wharf Hill, across the river and marsh. In the yard, close behind the house, is a very old and very dilapidated brick building of two rooms that was probably a kitchen in earlier days. In later years a kitchen wing was added to the east end of the dwelling, probably during the occupancy of Everard Todd. It was removed in 1974.

Between the residence and the river, on the edge of the hill, stood an old packing house, which was torn down in the 1950s. Across the front of this building, painted in large white letters was, "Established 1800—Todd's Packing House." The before-mentioned invoice of 1779 proves, however, that Captain Mallory Todd was shipping hams more than twenty years before 1800.

Captain Todd occupied this property until his death in 1817, and his widow remained there until she died in 1832, of Asiatic cholera, according to Dr. Purdie. Their tombstones may still be seen in a neglected and overgrown patch of woods in the field where the Old Bay Church once stood, across the road from Shoal Bay.

The property descended to their youngest son, Merit Moore Todd, as residuary legatee, and he resided there until he moved to Norfolk in 1834. He has had many descendants. He sold the house to Dr. James B. Southall who had married his sister Mary Moore (Polly) Todd, and they resided there for the rest of their lives.

Dr. Southall died in 1848, and is buried on his farm a few miles from Smithfield, that has been known for many years as the Goodrich farm. The town residence was bequeathed to their three daughters, one of whom, Nancy, married Everard M. Todd, her first cousin and

also a grandson of Captain Mallory Todd. The Todds and Southalls married and intermarried a number of times.

They were devout Episcopalians, and in 1833 Captain Todd's second son, Mallory Moore Todd, donated a lot in Smithfield to the members of the newly organized Christ Episcopal Church, on which a church was being erected. In the deed he names each of the forty charter members of the congregation, men, women, and children. Sixteen of them were Todds and eight were Southalls.

Ann R. Todd, eldest daughter of Mallory and Ann Robinson Todd, was married in 1809 to James H. Tucker, who also had come from Bermuda. She died in 1849 and is buried at the site of the Old Bay Church, as is her nine-year-old son, James Mallory Tucker, who died by drowning in 1822. Soon after the death of his wife, Tucker resigned as treasurer and sexton of Christ Church and returned to Bermuda.

Captain Todd's other daughters, who married and left many descendants, were: Angelina Mallory who married William Dickson, Louisa M. T. who married Westwood Armistead, and Eliza Augusta who married Turner H. Southall.

In 1814 Mallory Todd and Ann, his wife, made a gift to their eldest son, John R. Todd, of the "Old Town" property that is now the village of Battery Park, and John R. made his home there in the quaint little Dutch-roofed house that still stands on the village green. He appears, however, to have carried on the ham business in Smithfield, as an existing letterhead dated in the 1880s states that E. M. Todd, packer and curer of Smithfield hams, was successor to J. R. Todd.

During the Civil War there was a Confederate battery near Todd's residence at Battery Park overlooking the mouth of Pagan River, known as Todd's Battery, the guns of which were spiked and burned when the Confederates evacuated this area in May of 1862. Todd had died in January of that year, and in fear of the depredations of Yankee gunboats, his family abandoned their home and moved into Smithfield.

John R. Todd's wife was Eliza Armistead (1794-1879). Their youngest son, Everard Moore Todd, after receiving an L.L.B. at Harvard Law School, married his first cousin, Nancy Southall, and they made their home at the old Todd residence, "The Hill," in Smithfield, where he carried on the ham business. Here four of their five daughters and their two sons were born. Diana (1865-1953), their third daughter, was born at Hickory, North Carolina, where her father, Major Todd, C.S.A., was stationed as commissary officer. Their two sons died young and a portrait of one of them hung in the drawing room at "The Hill," along with portraits of Dr. James B. Southall and his wife, and ivory miniatures of Dr. Southall and Captain Mallory Todd.

The house was filled with family heirlooms and mementoes, including, among other antiques, a sewing stand that had been there since 1777, in which was kept a handmade baby cap and bib that had been worn by

Dr. <u>Mr. Mallory Todd in Acct Current with Ellerston & John Perot</u>										Dr.
To Amount of Sundries Shipped you of Cap. Francis, Hambur as per Invoice										114-
To 1 box of sundries Shipped you of ditto										3-
To Cash paid for a Hat, Shipped you of Cap. Ellis										18-
To Amount of Sundries, Shipped you of the Pamela Cap. Francis										114-
Hambur as per Invoice										150-
1779										
By 100 lbs. Apr. 30										
By 6 Hams May 15										
By 2 ditto 15										
By 19 ditto 12										
By 13.6.0										
By 5.4.0										
By Balance of their Acct. Charged Sundries Todd & Wilson										
1779										
S. Eustatius 12 th Novem ^r 1779										
Errors Excepted										
Ellerston & John Perot										
150.7.4										

Invoice for hams shipped by Captain Mallory Todd in 1779 to Ellerston and John Perot on the island of St. Eustatius in the West Indies. Courtesy of Parke Rouse, Jr.

The Todd house as it looks today. Photo by Dick Austin.





Joe Tynes, long-time employee of the Todd and Spratley packing companies, displays a genuine Smithfield ham. Courtesy of Robert A. Cox.



The home of the original Smithfield ham on Wharf Hill was a patriarch among packing houses. Unfortunately, it was torn down in the 1950s. Courtesy of Robert A. Cox.

Ann Robinson, wife of Captain Mallory Todd, about 1740.

When Nancy Southall Todd died in 1885 the window shutters at "The Hill" were drawn and remained tightly closed for a full year, and the five daughters went into deepest mourning, from which they emerged only for brief intervals during the rest of their lives. Long after the custom of wearing deep mourning had been discarded by practically everybody else, the five "Hill Todds" created something of a sensation when they appeared en masse on a shopping trip to Norfolk, or setting forth to church, clad in unrelieved black with heavy crape veils that reached to the hems of their skirts. In spite of this gloomy aspect, in the summer of 1909 when Smithfield fielded an exceptionally good baseball team, there were no more enthusiastic fans in town than the Todd sisters. They seldom missed a game and expressed their excitement by thumping their handsome silver handled umbrellas loudly, and sometimes violently, on the floor of the grandstand.

Within a short time after the death of his wife Todd married her niece, Julia Dickson Carroll, widow of George T. Carroll, and daughter of Mallory T. and Diana Southall Dickson. His daughters were incensed at this second marriage and he took his new wife to live in a house on South Mason Street. They had one daughter, Julia, who married and lived in Norfolk. After Mr. Todd's death in 1907 his widow also moved to Norfolk where she died in 1927. "The Hill" remained in possession of the five daughters. Miss Helen (1869-1944), the youngest, married her cousin, Tazewell T. Spratley, (1864-1916), continued to live at home, and Spratley carried on the ham business. He was also a great-grandson of Captain Mallory Todd. Miss Laura, at age forty-eight, married Willis Wilson Morrison and lived for many years at "Pleasant Point" in Surry County, but after becoming a widow came back to "The Hill." Miss Mary (1856-1935), Miss Nannie (1859-1923), and Miss Diana never married.

By 1953 the last of this branch of the family had



Miniatures that were recently presented to the Governor's Mansion in Richmond: right, Dr. James B. Southall, died 1845; left, Captain Mallory Todd, 1742-1817. Courtesy of J. Ricks Wilson.

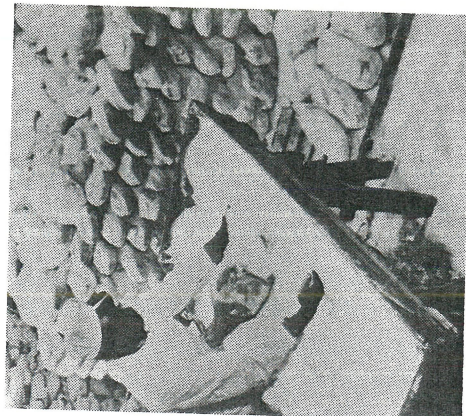
died, leaving no descendants, and "The Hill," with the accumulated possessions of four generations of Todds and Southalls, was left to the Reverend William Brayshaw.

Mr. Brayshaw had come to Smithfield in 1925 to serve as rector of Christ Church and the Old Brick Church. He had made his home with the Todd sisters for many years and was designated "my adopted son" in the will of Helen Todd Spratley. After the death of Miss Diana he lived alone at "The Hill" until his death in January 1958.

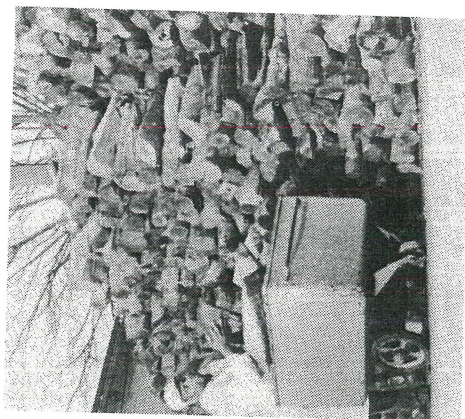
All of the property in Smithfield that he had inherited from the Todds was left to his nephew, Ilbert de Lacy Brayshaw, who occupied "The Hill" briefly before selling it. The old house that had been the home of the Todd family for about 185 years was then left empty and dilapidated.

In the summer of 1972 it was bought by David L. Holmes, a professor at the College of William and Mary, and his wife Carolyn. While they are not now occupying the house, they have done a great deal towards its restoration, and its preservation as one of Smithfield's most valued eighteenth century landmarks.

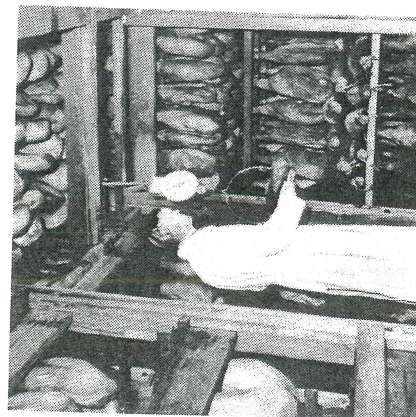
There are slight variations in the curing process of each company, but in general the process is similar to the one -oyer's of Smithfield gives in a piece of promotional information, "after curing for 40 days, the hams are washed, then air-dried for 14 days before being smoked over oak or hickory for two weeks. Finally, the hams are rolled in pepper and hung in aging rooms for at least six months."



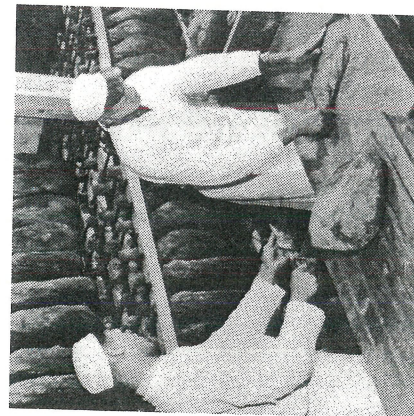
Salting hams



Hardwood for smoking



Weighing hams in smokehouse



Rolling hams in peppe

TODD

The earliest recorded sale of hams from Smithfield was in 1779. Capt. Mallory Todd had been in the shipping business before he came to Smithfield and made his home on Main Street. In 1779 he was shipping hams to St. Eustatius in the West Indies. He may have had a small smokehouse on his lot. In about 1786 Capt. Todd built a packing house on the lower side of his property near the river. That wooden structure was home to the Todd Ham Company for one hundred and twenty-one years.



Capt. Mallory Todd

Captain Mallory Todd conducted his ham business on the site of his home and smokehouse until his death on Nov. 4, 1817. There is a letter about hams written to M. M. Todd in April, 1818, which suggests that either Merit M. Todd or Mallory M. Todd, two of the captain's sons, were involved in the business shortly after his death. In all probability several of the young Todds worked the family business. By March 8, 1829, John R. Todd, the oldest son of Capt. Todd, was firmly in control of the business. Hams were shipped by the barrel with orders for ten and twelve barrels of hams being placed every other month by companies such as Maitland Phelps of New York.

John R. Todd continued to run the ham business for forty-five years until his death Jan. 15, 1862, at which time his son, Everard M. Todd took on the task and at thirty-five years old he had undoubtedly been involved in the company for some time. At the time of his marriage in 1854 when he was 27, E. M. Todd listed his occupation as a lawyer, but he lived on the Todd lot next to the packing house.

Mr. E. M. Todd had correspondence about hams from such places as Liverpool, England, and was providing information on the care of the hams he shipped. There has always been a need to supply new consumers with care and cooking instructions for such an unusual delight as Smithfield Ham.

SPRATLEY'S RECIPÉ TO BAKE HAM

Boil Ham until nearly done, remove skin, and place in baking-pan with small quantity of water and Hock Wine or Champagne. Cover fat surface with cracker dust seasoned with black pepper and salt. Occasionally baste with water and wine in pan, and bake in oven until thoroughly done.

TO BOIL HAM

Wash Ham, place in boiler with two or three buckets of cold water, according to size of ham. First boil very slowly, then steadily until thoroughly done. A ten pound ham usually requires four hours' boiling. Remove skin while hot.

About 1890 Mr. E. M. Todd had stationery printed in a style appropriate to the times. The Todd Co. was selling bacon and hams by the pound and piece instead of by the barrel. Hams were \$2.25 a piece.

ESTABLISHED 1890

Smithfield, Va., April 13, 1891

McDermott & Co.

TO E. M. TODD, DR.

Successor to J. R. TODD,

PACKER AND CURE OF TODD'S HAM.

Hams	20	lbs.	2.25	\$45.00
Bacon		lbs.		
Butter		lbs.		
Best and Finest				
Produce				

Early in 1907, E. M. Todd retired at seventy-nine years old. He made a contract with his son-in-law, Tazewell T. Spratley, to become manager of the E. M. Todd Co. Spratley was to have "half of my net profits . . . for the year ending Oct. 1, 1907." A month later he made another contract with W. S. Forbes Co. in Richmond which gave them the right to "use, preserve, cut, cure, pack and sell hams under the established branch name of J. R. Todd." The packaging was to say "Todd's Ham" in the same manner as was done in Smithfield and the hams were to be branded on the skin "E. R. Todd", his father's brand. Forbes agreed to pack and sell not less than twenty thousand hams a year. The royalty paid to Todd was \$0.1 a pound for all sold under this brand. Mr. Todd also reserved the right to pack and sell twelve thousand hams a year. These hams had to be sold directly to the consumer and not to a jobber, retail or wholesale. Forbes had the option to buy-out the Todd company on Oct. 1st of any year until 1917 for \$50,000.

On Sept. 25, 1907, Everard Moore Todd died. His only children were daughters. This was the end of the one hundred and twenty-eight year old Todd Ham Company in Smithfield. In his will he reiterated the contract with W. S. Forbes and expected the royalties to be paid to his family who were to divide them equally. Four of his five daughters by his first wife received the "Todd Lot" on Main Street which included the house and smokehouse. A fifth daughter, Helen M. Todd Spratley, and her husband requested that she not be a beneficiary under this part of the will.

The rights to cure and pack E. M. Todd's reserved share of twelve thousand hams a year were sold to Forbes with the royalties to be paid to his family at the same rate as the continuing original contract. Thomas B. Wright, executor, checked the books and made disbursements to the family as late as 1917. In 1908 the Forbes Co. contracted with V. W. Joyner to cure hams under the Todd brand, thus a competitor was now producing Todd Hams for a period of time.

The W. S. Forbes Company was owned by Mr. W. S. Forbes, Mr. A. C. Young Sr. and Mr. William Ormand Young. The Forbes Co. bought the E. M. Todd Co. around 1917, and Mr. Forbes left the company about 1921. Sometime in the mid twenties Mr. A. C. Young Sr. registered the Todd name. The E. M. Todd Company remained in the Young family under the guidance of A. Churchill Young, Jr. and A. Churchill Young, III until 1979. At that time an accountant with the firm purchased it jointly with three others. A. C. Young, III continued to work for the company until it was sold in 1984 to Mr. Richard Knapp who owns and operates the E. M. Todd Co. in Richmond at this time.

After the death of E. M. Todd, the E. M. Todd Co. no longer existed in Smithfield, but the smokehouse was never empty. Tazewell T. Spratley leased the smokehouse and produced, with the help of Joe Tynes, a long time employee of the E. M. Todd Co., the same quality hams he cured while with Mr. Todd. The hams were sold under his own brand of T. T. Spratley.

The Todd packing house remained on the Todd Lot until it was torn down in the 1950s.



Todd's Packing House in 1907

THE HAM CAPITAL OF THE WORLD

There are several theories about the origin of the process of curing Smithfield hams and bacon. Some believe that the Indians smoked hog meat to preserve it, and the early colonists followed their example. A few think the process was brought here by British sailors who learned it in the Orient. The Indian theory makes sense but cannot be—or at least has not been—proved.

The shipping news in the *Virginia Gazette* lists Captain Samuel Wentworth, who built the old brick house still standing on lot 70 in Smithfield, as shipping bacon and hams, corn, peas, and shingles as early as 1755. After his death in 1767 his estate was advertised as consisting of two schooners, *Four Sisters* and *Little Molly*; a large quantity of rum, sugar, and molasses; between three and four thousandweight of hams; about one hundred barrels of pork; about two tons of hemp; forty to fifty thousand cypress shingles and sundry other things.¹ With all this pork on hand there must have been considerable trade in it at the time.

A petition in 1809 to the General Assembly asking for an act to prevent hogs from being allowed to roam the streets of Smithfield may seem amusing now, but it was serious business to the residents of Smithfield at that time. The petition stated that hogs roaming the streets were a great inconvenience and injury. The petitioners deemed it a grievance that a few individuals should have it in their power to annoy the great majority, particularly as these few were free Negroes. They also asked to have trustees for the town. Justices of the county were still in control of Smithfield in 1809. There were eighteen signatures to the petition, which must have been most of the older men of Smithfield: James Chalmers, John H. Purdie, J. B. Southall, Joseph Atkinson, Robert Butler, Andrew Woodley, Henry Welsh, Nicholas Jordan, Wilson Davis, Robert West, John Eason, B. Drew, James

1 Dashiell, "Business Tcp News in Pre-Revolutionary War," *Daily Press and Times Herald*, March 26, 1985.

Delaine, Mallory Todd, Jno. R. Todd, Mills Stephenson, Robert West, Thomas Purdie, and Richard W. Byrd, an attorney who must have drawn up the petition.² It is doubtful if the General Assembly did anything to relieve the people in Smithfield of the annoyance of hogs in the streets.

Before the building of the Norfolk and Petersburg Railroad (or any railroads) through the western or southern end of the county, the trade in "Isle of Wight Bacon" and "Smithfield Hams" reached out for thirty or forty miles into other counties. Drives from Kentucky, North Carolina, and Tennessee brought in thousands of hogs to supply the demands of this flourishing trade, especially with the West Indies, in exchange for rum, sugar, and coffee.³ It is hard to believe that hogs made this long journey by foot. They must have stayed on the trail for weeks, and a great many were probably lost, filling the woods with the famous razorbacks.

In an 1836 publication are some comments about Smithfield's bacon:

The bacon curing business is carried on here to great perfection, more extensively and perhaps more profitably than in any other place in the U.S. The bacon cured here has been celebrated for its superior flavor, and the manner in which it is cured; large quantities of it are shipped annually in coasting vessels; it commands the preference in all of the markets, and is a source of great revenue.⁴

What makes a Smithfield ham so different and special? It is cut differently from most hams, long from butt to snank, not squared off like most country hams. The rest is in the curing. In the winter hams are salted by hand and allowed to lie for two weeks. By this time, the salt has penetrated almost to the bone. This second layer of salt is rinsed off, and again salt is applied for another two weeks. By this time, the hams are peppered and hung in the smokehouses, allowed to dry for a few days, then smoked with hardwood fire for approximately two weeks. The genuine Smithfield ham has to go through a summer for aging, which means hams are usually ready for the market near Thanksgiving.

2 Isle of Wight Legislative Petitions, 1809.

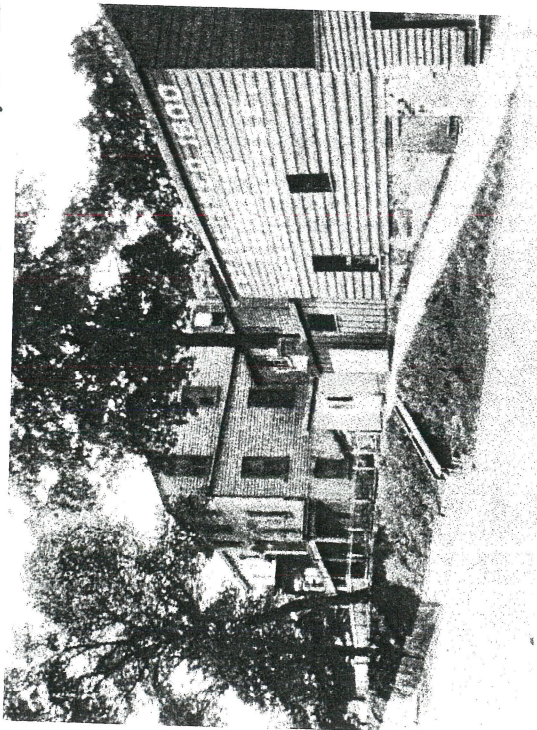
3 Morrison, *Isle of Wight County*, p. 29.

4 Martin, *Gazetteer of Virginia*, p. 197.

There are many variations of the above methods. Practically every farmer who cures his own hams has a slightly different method. Sometimes the salt bath is shortened to only four or five days, and the hams are given a longer smoking period, perhaps alternating days of smoking. Those in charge of the smokehouses inspect the hams carefully for color and odor, using a thin, flattened ice pick to pierce the meat to the bone. The odor left on the ice pick can tell the story. The weather is all-important. There are very few farmers left who cure any hams, even for their own use, much less a few extras for selling. The few who are in the business do not need, and do not try, to comply with federal regulations for inter-state trade. They have enough sales locally. They have a long wait for any returns on their money, as the hams must hang for at least six months.

Todd's Packing House

Mallory Todd, a native of Bermuda, came to the new town of Smithfield around 1767, established a ham business, and is today known as the originator of the world-famous Smithfield ham. An invoice dated 1779 proves he was in the ham business as early as April 30 of that year — the



The Todd house and adjacent packing house on Main Street. Although the house remains a private residence, the packing house was razed in the 1950s.

Courtesy of the Isle of Wight Museum

date of the first known shipment. This invoice from Ellerston and John Periot, Saint Eustatius Island, West Indies, mentions hams shipped from Mallory Todd to them, as well as articles bought by Todd. This historic document now hangs in the office of the vice-president of the E. M. Todd Company, Richmond, Virginia, along with a picture of Mallory Todd, who started the Smithfield ham on its way to world fame.

Many still living can remember the old building on the Wharf Hill just below the Todd residence. On the side next to the brick sidewalk were these words painted in white: ESTABLISHED 1800 - TODD'S PACKING HOUSE. Unfortunately, this historic old red building was torn down in the 1950s.

Mallory Todd married Angelina Mallory, daughter of John Mallory who had extensive land holdings in Day's Point. Angelina died in 1776, and none of her children lived to maturity. Todd and his second wife, Anne Robinson of York County, had twelve children. Mallory Todd died in 1817, and Anne Robinson Todd died in 1832 of Asiatic cholera. Both are buried in the Old Bay Church Cemetery across the Old Stage Highway from Shoal Bay, now a neglected patch of woods and briars. While many of the other Todds are buried in St. Luke's Cemetery, the originator of the famous Smithfield ham lies in an abandoned graveyard. This discrepancy is of great concern to many in Smithfield.

One of Mallory Todd's sons, John R., received as a gift from his father and mother a large tract of land in what is now Battery Park. John R. must have carried on the ham business from there, as the will of his son, Everard Moore Todd, proves. Everard Moore married his cousin, Nancy Southall, and came back to The Hill, the Todd family home in Smithfield, to live and carry on the business his grandfather had established. His two sons died young, and there were only girls left to inherit the property and business. Everard, or E. M., as he was known, planned the future of the Smithfield ham business before his death.

By 1907 when E. M. Todd wrote his will, P. D. Gwaltney, Jr., was firmly established in the ham business, and V. W. Joyner was doing a thriving retail business in his store on Commerce Street, curing hams in the back yard of his home on lot 42, Main Street. B. P. Chapman was also in business on Commerce Street. Item six in Todd's will states:

By an agreement dated February 8th, 1907, by and between myself, E. M. Todd, trading under the firm name and style of E. M. Todd Company of Smithfield, Virginia, and W. S. Forbes, trading under the firm name of W. S. Forbes & Company, of the City of Richmond, Virginia, which agreement is in writing,

executed in duplicate, and a copy whereof will be found either with this my last Will and Testament, or in my desk at my said residence, and to which reference is hereby had, as fully, completely and effectually, to all intents and purposes, as if the same were herein incorporated, I have bargained, sold, assigned and granted unto the said W. S. Forbes & Company the sole and exclusive right and privilege to use, preserve, cut, cure, pack and sell hams under my well-known and established brand of "J. R. Todd," except the right and privilege which is reserved to me in said agreement and instrument in writing, to cut, cure, preserve, pack and sell, under the said brand, twelve thousand (12,000) hams each year during the existence of the agreement aforesaid, provided said hams are to be sold and delivered by me direct to the consumer and not to the jobber or packer directly or indirectly or to the retail or wholesale trade.

The said agreement to continue in full force and effect for a period of ten years from the date thereof, with the privilege on the part of the said W. S. Forbes & Company to renew the said contract and agreement for a further period of ten years.

The said W. S. Forbes Company to pack and sell each year, under the aforesaid brand not less than twenty thousand (20,000) hams, and to pay to me as a royalty therefor one cent per pound for all hams packed and sold under said brand, with the right and privilege to the said W. S. Forbes & Company on the first day of October of each year, during the continuance and existence of the said agreement to buy my entire business now conducted under the style of E. M. Todd Company, of Smithfield, Virginia, consisting of the said brand, aforesaid, all other brands, if any, owned by me, books showing the names of customers, etc., and the good will of every nature, kind and description whatsoever, which properly belong to and constitute a part of the said business conducted by me under the aforesaid name and style, for the sum of fifty thousand dollars (50,000).⁵

The W. S. Forbes and Company was listed in a Richmond directory as being located at 10th and Byrd Streets. They were advertised under "Provisions-Wholesale" as being pork packers and dealing in dry salt meats, stricken meats, sausage, and pure and compound lard.⁶

⁵ Will Book 34, pp. 139-141.

⁶ *Greater Richmond, Virginia, Directory, 1907*, pp. 294, 842.

E. M. Todd's will was written on July 6, 1907, and was recorded on October 2, 1907. He named as his executor T. B. Wright. So this explains why E. M. Todd Company is now located in Richmond, where it is curing and packing approximately ninety thousand hams a year and also selling jowls, bacon, and shoulders. It is restricted by law from selling genuine Smithfield hams, as those have to be cured within the town limits of Smithfield, but it does sell old Virginia hams.

The old Todd packing house no longer stands on the Wharf Hill in Smithfield; the famous old residence, however, stands as a mute reminder of a young man who came to a young Smithfield and established the ham business which carried the name of Smithfield far and wide.

Gwaltney of Smithfield, Inc.

When P. D. Gwaltney, Sr., moved to Smithfield in 1870, he formed a partnership with his cousin, O. G. Delk. They ran a retail business on Commerce Street. In exchange for sugar, salt, flour, coffee, and other staples, they received hams, shoulders, bacon, chickens, and eggs. Delk



P. D. Gwaltney, Sr. and grandson P. D. III
Courtesy of Howard W. Gwaltney

A History of the Smithfield Ham Industry

**by
Marion G. Everett
and
Patay B. Barham
Smithfield Library Association**

1993

A Publication of the Isle of Wight County Museum,
A Division of the Isle of Wight County Public Recreational Facilities Authority

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THE SMITHFIELD HAM INDUSTRY

For over a hundred years, in story and advertisement, native Americans have been given credit for originating the salt and hardwood-smoke dry cured Smithfield Ham. This may only have been an early twentieth century myth designed to take advantage of the popularity of Indians and mast-fed razor-back hogs. Every culture develops methods of curing food to prevent deterioration and the English who settled here brought with them some of these methods and undoubtedly acquired new ones from the Indians. Whatever the origins of the cure, the Smithfield Ham is a ham that keeps indefinitely without refrigeration; an important requirement for the humid eastern portion of Virginia.

Though the ham's early popularity was probably due to its keeping qualities, the Smithfield Ham is world renowned for its distinctive taste. That taste was touted as being from the oak and beech mast that the hogs fed on when allowed to roam the woods and then, in their last fattening up stage, from the peanuts that they ate when put in the field after harvest. Most of today's hogs are fed more scientifically and the breeds vary from the true razor-back hog, but the cure is the same and so is the end product: a delicious Smithfield Ham.



Razor Back Hogs in 1907

The first quarter of the twentieth century saw a rapid growth of the Smithfield meat industry; not all of that industry was in Smithfield nor was it all producing the finest products. In order to protect the good name of the genuine Smithfield product that local companies had been producing and cultivating a gourmet market for, the Department of Agriculture convinced the General Assembly of Virginia at its regular session of 1926 to enact a law that defined genuine Smithfield meats. That statute is found on page 1,000 of the Acts. In brief, it states that every piece of genuine Smithfield meat should be from peanut-fed hogs raised in the peanut belt of Virginia or North Carolina and cured within the town limits of Smithfield. The town limits have expanded since then and the law has been amended by Senate Bill #101 in January of 1968. Now hogs no longer have to be raised in the peanut belt.

FOREWORD

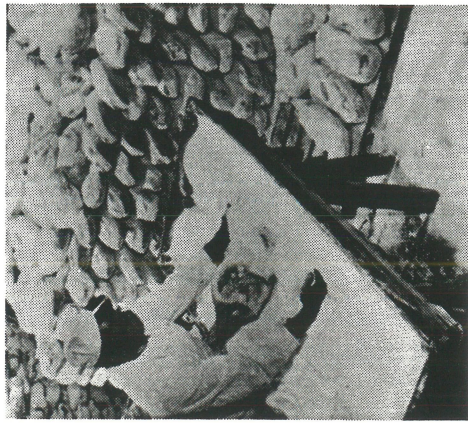
The Isle of Wight Museum is pleased to present this publication on the occasion of the grand re-opening of the Museum, after extensive renovations, and the dedication of the new Sprigg Wing, in honor of the late James C. Sprigg, Jr., founder of one of Smithfield's meat packing companies. It is through the generosity of his widow, Mrs. Maria Holt Sprigg, one of the principal benefactors of the project, that the Museum has been able to expand at this time, acquiring the adjacent Folk Building and converting it into a museum gallery.

"Smithfield's Meat Packing Industry" is one of the two major exhibits in the new wing, and this publication is designed to compliment and accompany the gallery display. Until this time, we are aware of no one single pamphlet that has contained a comprehensive, chronological account of the various companies producing the world-renowned Smithfield hams, which have made the town and county so famous. This is an attempt to outline each of the different companies separately, giving an insight into the "personality" of each one as they have come and gone in history, leaving a legacy in their own unique way. We regret if there are omissions of which we are not aware. Those interested in knowing more about the subject may contact the Museum and make an appointment to study the files in our Reference Room.

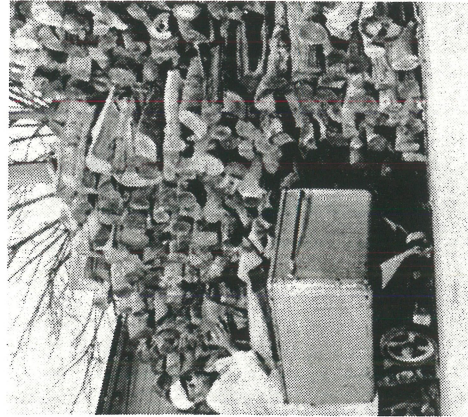
Nelle H. Pitman
Curator

May, 1993

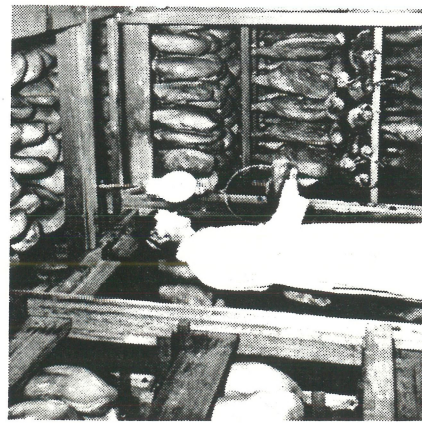
There are slight variations in the curing process of each company, but in general the process is similar to the one Joyner's of Smithfield gives in a piece of promotional information, "after curing for 40 days, the hams are washed, then air-dried for 14 days before being smoked over oak or hickory for two weeks. Finally, the hams are rolled in pepper and hung in aging rooms for at least six months."



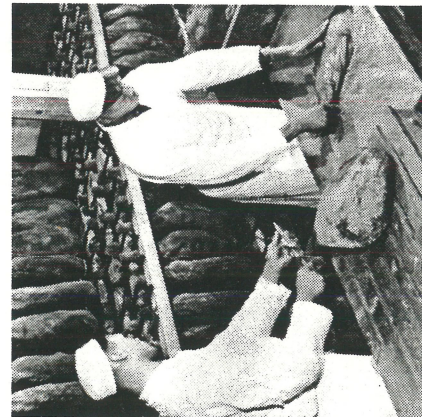
Salting hams



Hardwood for smoking



Weighting hams in smokehouse



Rolling hams in pepper

TODD

The earliest recorded sale of hams from Smithfield was in 1779. Capt. Mallory Todd had been in the shipping business before he came to Smithfield and made his home on Main Street. In 1779 he was shipping hams to St. Eustatius in the West Indies. He may have had a small smokehouse on his lot. In about 1786 Capt. Todd built a packing house on the lower side of his property near the river. That wooden structure was home to the Todd Ham Company for one hundred and twenty-one years.



Capt. Mallory Todd

Captain Mallory Todd conducted his ham business on the site of his home and smokehouse until his death on Nov. 4, 1817. There is a letter about hams written to M. M. Todd in April, 1818, which suggests that either Merit M. Todd or Mallory M. Todd, two of the captain's sons, were involved in the business shortly after his death. In all probability several of the young Todds worked the family business. By March 8, 1829, John R. Todd, the oldest son of Capt. Todd, was firmly in control of the business. Hams were shipped by the barrel with orders for ten and twelve barrels of hams being placed every other month by companies such as Maitland Phelps of New York.

John R. Todd continued to run the ham business for forty-five years until his death Jan. 15, 1862, at which time his son, Everard M. Todd took on the task and at thirty-five years old he had undoubtedly been involved in the company for some time. At the time of his marriage in 1854 when he was 27, E. M. Todd listed his occupation as a lawyer, but he lived on the Todd lot next to the packing house.

Early in 1907, E. M. Todd retired at seventy-nine years old. He made a contract with his son-in-law, Tazewell T. Spratley, to become manager of the E. M. Todd Co. Spratley was to have "half of my nett profits . . . for the year ending Oct. 1, 1907." A month later he made another contract with W. S. Forbes Co. in Richmond which gave them the right to "use, preserve, cut, cure, pack and sell hams under the established branch name of J. R. Todd." The packaging was to say "Todd's Ham" in the same manner as was done in Smithfield and the hams were to be branded on the skin "J. R. Todd"; his father's brand. Forbes agreed to pack and sell *not less* than twenty thousand hams a year. The royalty paid to Todd was \$0.1 a pound for all sold under this brand. Mr. Todd also reserved the right to pack and sell twelve thousand hams a year. These hams *had* to be sold directly to the consumer and not to a jobber, retail or wholesale. Forbes had the option to buy-out the Todd company on Oct. 1st of any year until 1917 for \$50,000.

Boil Ham until nearly done, remove skin, and place in baking-pan with small quantity of water and Hock Wine or Champagne. Cover fat surface with cracker: dust seasoned with black pepper and salt: Occasionally baste with water and wine in pan, and bake in oven until thoroughly done.

Wash Ham, place in boiler with two or three buckets of cold water, according to size of ham. First boil very slowly, then steadily until thoroughly done. A ten pound ham usually requires four hours' boiling. Remove skin while hot.

After the death of E. M. Todd, the E. M. Todd Co. no longer existed in Smithfield, but the smokehouse was never empty. Tarzwell T. Spratley leased the smokehouse and produced, with the help of Joe Tynes, a long time employee of the E. M. Todd Co., the same quality hams he cured while with Mr. Todd. The hams were sold under his own brand of T. T. Spratley.

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Todd's Packing House in 1907

ESTABLISHED 1800

Smithfield, Va., April 13, 1885

No 220 Pigs

T. C. E. M. TODD, DR.

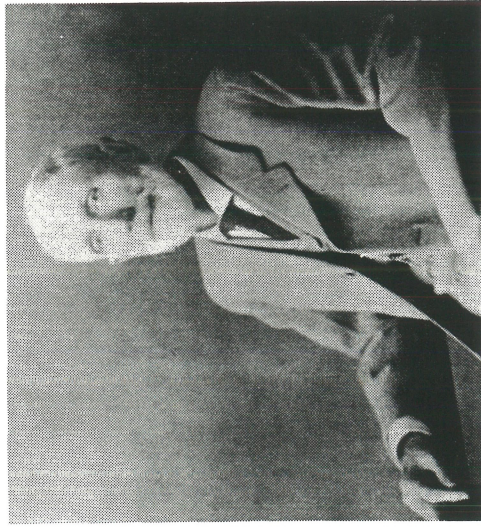
Successor to J. R. TODD,

PACKER AND CURER OF TODD'S HAMS.

<i>Hams,</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>lbs.</i>	<i>22 1/2</i>	<i>22 1/2</i>
<i>Breakfast Bacon,</i>	<i>lbs.</i>			
<i>Shoulders,</i>	<i>lbs.</i>			
<i>Side and Pepper,</i>				
<i>Pickled,</i>				

GWALTNEY HAM COMPANY

The Gwaltney name has been associated with the ham business in Smithfield since the 1870's. Pembroke Decatur Gwaltney was born in 1836, the son of Benjamin T. and Martha Delk Gwaltney. Mr. P. D. Gwaltney married Martha Virginia Harris and in 1861 their son P. D., Jr., was born.



P. D. Gwaltney Sr., c. 1910

As far back as 1859, Mr. Gwaltney had a gunsmithing business in Norfolk. This business was known as "P. D. Gwaltney and Company". The name would later be associated with various other goods and services. It continues today as "Gwaltney, Inc.", a subsidiary of Smithfield Foods, Incorporated

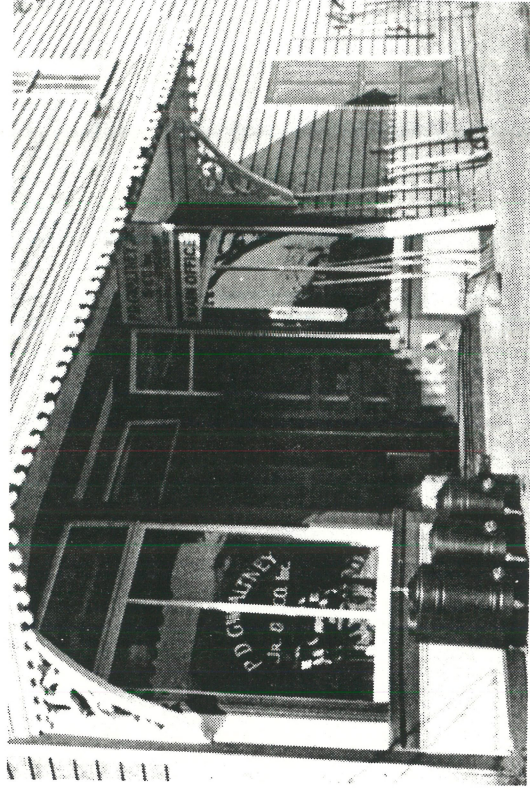
ESTABLISHMENT OF PARTNERSHIPS IN SMITHFIELD

After serving in the Civil War in the Surry Light Artillery Unit, P. D. Gwaltney moved to Smithfield from Surry. He started a business with his cousin, O. G. Delk. The two young men, in 1870, formed a partnership known as "Gwaltney and Delk". It included a retail mercantile business, a freighting concern with the sloop "Three Sisters" as well as selling cured and smoked hams, sides and shoulders. The store was located at 117 Commerce Street in the Smithfield wharf area. They rented and later purchased the property from the W. H. Jordan heirs. Behind the store were sheds and smokehouses used for processing and curing the meat. These two young men knew the secret of successfully producing a fine smoked ham, known as Smithfield ham.

The partnership with Mr. Delk was dissolved in 1875, and Mr. Gwaltney retained the store, smokehouse, sheds and the wharf property. Mr. Delk retained the shipping business and sloop. The business name was changed to "P. D. Gwaltney and Company". Within a few years Mr. Gwaltney went into another business partnership. This time his partners were Mr. J. Wesley Chapman and P. D. Gwaltney, Jr., his son. The business was virtually the same that P. D., Sr. was already operating: that being mercantile and pork processing operations. This partnership was formed in 1880 and was known as "Gwaltney, Chapman and Company". The three stayed in business together until the partnership dissolved in 1882.

P. D. GWALTNEY, JR. AND COMPANY

After the partnership with Mr. Chapman was ended, P. D. Gwaltney, Sr. and P. D., Jr. went into business together. The younger Mr. Gwaltney, who was only 21 years of age, was to operate the business in the wharf area.

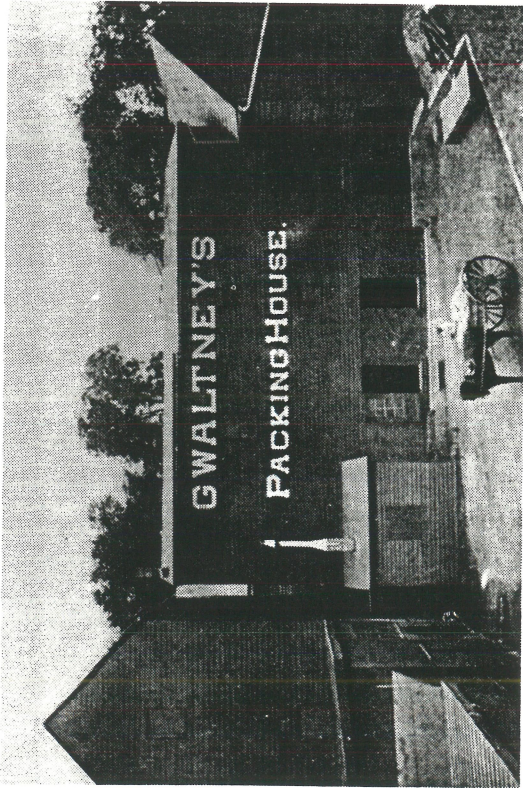


P. D. Gwaltney, Jr. and Company, Inc., Commerce Street store, 1935

A billing invoice from 1886 identified P. D. Gwaltney and Sons as dealers in groceries, dry goods and general merchandising with fertilizer and fine Smithfield Hams as "specialties". Mr. P. D. Gwaltney, Sr. had other business and civic interests in Smithfield. He had an interest in the Gwaltney-Bunkley Peanut Company with its warehouse in the wharf area. He was active in church and civic affairs as well as being instrumental in starting the Smithfield Telephone Company and the Bank of Smithfield. After 1890, P. D. Gwaltney, Sr. gave his efforts to the peanut cleaning and shipping business.

EXPANSION

P. D. Gwaltney, Jr. managed the mercantile store and expanded it into meat packing business. In 1906 P. D. Gwaltney, Jr. and Company modernized their curing and smoking buildings which were behind the store on Commerce Street. This expansion, known later as "Plant 1", doubled the size of the plant. At this time Smithfield hams were selling for 19½ cents per pound. Federal inspection of meat started in 1907.



Gwaltney Packing House, 1910

In 1912, Gwaltney bought land behind the store from Thomas Purdie in order to expand the curing and smoking facilities. The price of Smithfield hams was now 23 cents a pound and bacon was 16 cents a pound.

P. D. Gwaltney, Jr. and Company in 1919 sold over 295,000 pounds of smoked pork products, including 164,000 pounds of Smithfield hams.

PET HAM

The method of salting and smoking used to cure Smithfield hams insures against spoilage. P. D. Gwaltney, Jr. had kept a ham cured in 1902 which became quite a famous ham. For twenty years this ham hung from a rafter in one of the packing houses. It was exposed to summer heat and winter cold. Originally the ham weighed 38½ pounds, but by the 1920's had lost 65% of its weight. Nevertheless, it was sound and fit to eat. Mr. Gwaltney speculated that the ham would be good for another 25 to 50 years.



P. D. Gwaltney, Jr. with "pet ham," 1920's

After 1924, the ham was kept in an iron safe which was opened daily in order for the ham to get air and for guests to view this famous ham. It was advertised as the "World's Oldest Smithfield Ham". Mr. P. D. Gwaltney, Jr. had the ham insured for \$1,000 against fire or theft. He carried the ham around the country to food fairs and expositions where it was carefully guarded. A brass collar was fitted around the shank end of the ham so that it could be securely fastened to the floor when on exhibit.

By 1932, this ham had increased in notoriety and was insured for \$5,000. The "Pet Ham" was featured in Robert Ripley's "Believe It or Not", on June 2, 1932. A picture of a ham with the following inscription appeared: "P. D. Gwaltney, Jr.'s Pet Ham — Although never introduced to cold storage — remains tender and sweet and fit to eat after 30 years". This was quite an endorsement for the durability of the Smithfield hams. Mr. Gwaltney's "Pet Ham" is on display in the Isle of Wight County Museum.

Two branding irons which belonged to P. D. Gwaltney, Jr. and Company are in the collection of the Isle of Wight Museum. One bears the mark "P. D. G. Jr. & Co. Smithfield, Va." The other is similar, but of a different shape. When heated, these irons were used to brand the skin of the hams giving the name of the producer.

FAMILY BUSINESS

A 1923 newspaper advertisement described P. D. Gwaltney, Jr. and Company as one of the largest mercantile businesses in Eastern Virginia. They advertised products as diverse as furniture, fencing and fertilizer. They also cured their own ham, jowls, bacon and sides. A logo used in advertising was "See us before you sell your cured or green meat." At this time Gwaltney and Company had 60,000 square feet of building space and employed 25 people. In 1929, the company was incorporated and reorganized. The officers of the company were:

P. D. Gwaltney, Jr. — President and Chairman

Howard W. Gwaltney — Vice President

P. D. Gwaltney, III — Secretary-Treasurer

Julius D. Gwaltney — Assistant Treasurer

Mr. Gwaltney, Sr. had died in 1915. When P. D. Gwaltney, Jr. died in 1936, the officers were changed to:

Howard W. Gwaltney — President

Julius D. Gwaltney — Vice President

P. D. Gwaltney, III — Secretary-Treasurer and Chairman



P. D. Gwaltney, III, Julius Gwaltney and Howard Gwaltney

In 1936, Plant #2, a slaughter house and fresh pork packing plant, began operation. This was located on the north side of the Pagan River bridge on Route 10, just outside the Smithfield town limits. It was used for killing and cutting hogs. This was the second slaughter house in Virginia to be built in accordance with F. D. A. Federal Meat Inspection regulations. Before the addition of this plant all meat was purchased from surrounding farmers as dressed carcasses or cut up meat. With the new plant, close to 12,000 hogs were slaughtered in 1937. This amounted to over 1 million pounds of pork including 652,500 pounds of Smithfield hams. Plant #2 burned in 1981, and was completely removed in 1992, when Smithfield Foods, Inc. undertook a beautification project in that area of Smithfield.



Gwaltney Plant No. 2 under construction in 1936

OUT-OF-STATE VENTURE

A \$500,000 meat processing plant was built at Kinston in 1948 in Lenoir County, North Carolina. P. D. Gwaltney, Jr. agreed to lease the plant for \$30,000 annually with an option to buy in five years. This plant did not produce smoked meats but was equipped as a meat packing plant. The North Carolina community was anxious to have such a plant in their area. Although not under continuous operation of any of the Smithfield companies, the plant has been a part of Smithfield Packing Company since 1978.

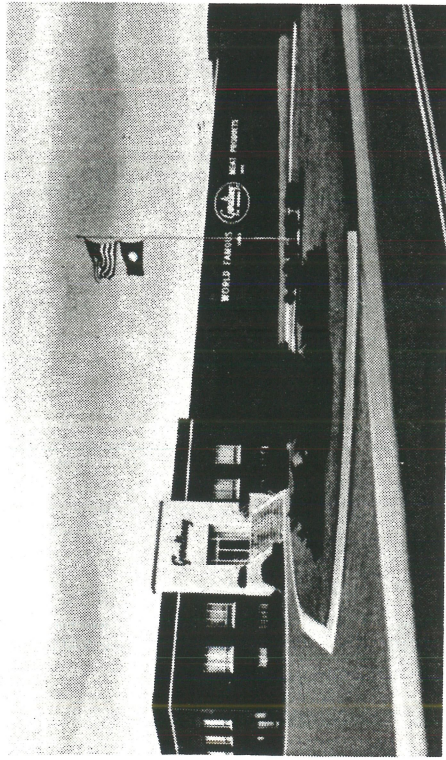
HOME TOWN EXPANSION

F. D. Gwaltney and Company planned a \$1,250,000 expansion and improvement to their facility in Smithfield. The first phase of Plant #3 was an \$850,000 addition. This occupied a 9 acre site near Plant #2 on Route 10 just north of the Pagan River bridge. This phase, built in 1954, was designed to include hog killing, cutting, by-product rendering, lard refining and livestock yards. The plant could process 1,250 hogs daily. The plant produced mostly the conventional fresh and processed meats. But for a few months out of the year it did produce the long-cut hams from peanut fed hogs used exclusively for genuine Smithfield hams. These hams were still smoked in the original smokehouse in the wharf area of Smithfield. With this addition to the plant, the company began to grow rapidly and successfully.

The name of P. D. Gwaltney, Jr. and Company was changed in 1957 to "Gwaltney, Inc." In 1967, the company went public and stock was sold on the "Over the Counter" market under the Securities and Exchange Commission.

CELEBRATION

Gwaltney, Inc. was 90 years old in 1961, and this was also the year that Plant #3 was completed. The company wanted to celebrate! They had a giant open house on Sunday, April 9, 1961. Eleven thousand people from nearby and from as far away as Boston and Philadelphia came. The guests were treated to refreshments, favors and prizes along with a tour of the new plant. This was the most modern, most automatic packing plant in the East. A complete flow-through work procedure meant that the company could produce twice the number of products it had previously been producing. For example, now bacon could be weighed, sliced and wrapped in one operation. There were automatic racks for curing Pagan hams through all phases of the curing process. The plant was completely refrigerated and air-conditioned.



Gwaltney Plant No. 3, 1961

ITT GWALTNEY

In 1970 International Telephone and Telegraph, Inc. made an offer to buy Gwaltney, Inc. for \$41.9 million in ITT stock. At this time Gwaltney, Inc. had three plants and employed 1200 people. For fiscal year 1970, Gwaltney had earnings of \$2.1 million with total sales of \$61.9 million. In three years the price of Gwaltney's stock had risen from \$10.83 per share to \$41 per share in 1970. As a subsidiary of ITT, the management of Gwaltney, Inc. would not change. However, the name was changed to ITT Gwaltney.

GWALTNEY FAMILY LEAVES ITT GWALTNEY

Slowly the family was getting out of the once family-owned business. In 1967, P. D. Gwaltney, III had retired as treasurer. In 1970, he retired from the Board of Directors. Julius Gwaltney retired as executive vice president in 1971. In 1972, Howard Gwaltney retired as president and from the Board of Directors. P. D. Gwaltney, III died in 1981.

GWALTNEY BOUGHT BY SMITHFIELD FOODS

In 1981, ITT Gwaltney became a subsidiary of Smithfield Foods, Inc. The name was changed back to Gwaltney, Inc. and the management was left intact. Even though Smithfield Packing Company and Gwaltney, Inc. are both owned by the same parent company, they compete with each other as in days gone by. The name "Gwaltney" is recognized by customers far and wide and is highly respected by local people. The Gwaltney name is not only associated with delicious meat products but with individuals who have given a great deal to the Smithfield community both financially and personally.

The remains of Gwaltney's Plant #1 on Commerce Street were completely removed in 1991. Smithfield Foods, Inc. hopes to use this area in a proposed development of the waterfront in Smithfield.

THE V. W. JOYNER COMPANY

Vincent W. Joyner was born in 1862, in the home his father, William W. Joyner had purchased just three years earlier. Its location just south of Orbit, Isle of Wight County, Virginia, was close to the town of Smithfield. He was reared during the War between the States and the reconstruction period which surely must have influenced him, and perhaps encouraged his drive in business.



V. W. Joyner, c. 1913

In 1891 W. W. (Willie) Joyner, brother of V. W. Joyner, bought a lot on Commerce Street from Joseph Goodrich and his wife, Lelia. It was adjacent to the Old Dominion Steamship Co. on the water side and was a good place for a business. On this Commerce Street lot, the Joyner brothers began their commercial enterprise where they sold clothing, canned goods, toilet articles, notions, light hardware and crockery. The Isle of Wight County Museum has a shoe button hook imprinted "V. W. Joyner — Boots and Shoes — Smithfield, Va."

Through the early years of the general mercantile, Vincent was busily making contracts with farmers for peanuts and hogs as well. The earliest record available for the V. W. Joyner Co. was dated October 12, 1891. On that day, for \$75 Mr. Joyner contracted with Andrew Edwards to buy four hogs and "all of two acres of peanuts now in the ground and growing." Mr. Edwards was to "dig and stack and cure said peanuts and pick some off and bag and deliver them to the said V. W. Joyner at his store on Commerce St., Smithfield." Peanuts were in demand and Smithfield had a large peanut industry; most of which was in the Commerce Street area. The Edwards contract did not indicate what he intended to do with the hogs, but it was likely that they were to be cured and sold in the store as was the practice locally. Hams were hung uncovered from the rafters by the twine used in the smokehouse just as a lantern or other merchandise might be displayed. It was easier to select a ham under these conditions, but less sanitary.

Several Smithfield ham businesses began as general stores which sold cured meat as well as hardware and dry goods. A farmer who had his own smokehouse might sell or barter hams for other goods in the store and the store owner would then have hams to sell. Occasionally the store owner smoked his own hams in a small smokehouse behind the store. The Gwaltney, Joyner and Chapman ham companies began in this manner on Commerce Street, Smithfield, Virginia.

In August of 1894, V. W. Joyner and his wife, Belle, purchased the property on Main St., known as lot #42, from A. R. Chalmers. The property contained a house where they would live. It was a two story rather square house with a porch, trimmed in gingerbread style, across the entire front. The lot was only 89½ feet wide, but was 355 feet deep, running from Main Street to Cedar Street. The trustee for the deed was E. M. Todd, who was a lawyer and the owner of the E. M. Todd Ham Co.

The Sanborn-Perris Map Co. map gives a foot print of each building on the lot in 1901. The house is on the left side of the lot as one faces it from Main Street. (A driveway and parking lot for the Joyner Smithfield Ham Shop are in that spot now.) There were three small buildings just behind the house in 1901, and one probably was his smokehouse. The twenty-six foot wide lot on Commerce Street was not large enough to hold a smokehouse as well as the store.

The opportunity arose in 1897 for V. W. Joyner to buy the lot on Commerce Street that was next to the store lot his brother owned. They then had space enough to expand the mercantile business and have a storehouse on the two adjoining lots. The ham business within the general store was growing. As far as we know, V. W. Joyner only cured and packed hams from prepared meat. There had never been a slaughtering operation in connection with his company.

A letter, dated Nov. 1907, on Tazewell T. Spratley Co. stationery stated that since Mr. E. M. Todd's death in 1907, Mr. W. S. Forbes of Richmond "made an arrangement with a packer in Smithfield, Va., Mr. V. W. Joyner, to pack some hams for him. . . the above Mr. Joyner was an opponent in the ham business against Mr. E. M. Todd and never packed one ham in the Todd Plant or packing house in his life." Mr. Joyner was packing Todd hams for Forbes in his smokehouse in 1907 and the Sanborn-Perris Map for 1907 shows two additional buildings that had been erected since 1901 midway and to the rear of the lot on Main Street. The Joyner ham company was developing and growing steadily in addition to the general store.

An agreement between Vincent W. Joyner and his brother, Willie W. Joyner made Vincent sole owner of the two lots on Commerce Street in the fall of 1911. Business for the general store was good.

Both businesses were expanding until 1971 when Vincent W. Joyner died intestate. He had been active in community affairs and served as mayor of Smithfield. As in most families, ownership of the home lot #42 was complicated; both the home and smokehouse were on this lot. The years between 1917 and 1935 show a series of problems and adjustments in the ownership of the property. During this time the lot was divided in half with a right of passage built on the right side of the front portion to gain entry to the back portion where the smokehouse was located. A road still exists there today.

Mr. Joyner's widow, Belle, and three of their children eventually sold their interest in the home lot #42 to the fourth child, Mary Joyner Cox and her husband who was running the business. He immediately formed a partnership with Joseph McSweeney from Richmond and called that partnership the V. W. Joyner Co. The year was 1922. At this point we lose Mr. McSweeney. Records never tell us what became of that partnership. By 1923 the last building placed on the rear portion of lot #42 was expanded to five times its original size in length reaching almost to Cedar Street. This was the smokehouse. This is known because the Sanborn map of 1923 shows the additions and labels the building "SMOKE HOUSE". There were five partitions in the building and a porch structure on the side.

The Commerce Street store boasting over 3,000 square feet of floor space (the two combined twenty-six foot lots) was still in operation, but as Joyner & Jones. After V. W. Joyner's death, Mr. Calvin P. Jones was manager with Mrs. V. W. Joyner still a member of the firm which had discontinued the V. W. Joyner name.

Brands for V. W. Joyner & Co., (which was then the name of the ham operation only) by 1923, were "MAST FED" and JOYNER'S VIRGINIA HAM AND BACON. An advertisement in the *Smithfield Times* claims the company was "established in 1889 as curers and packers of Smithfield Hams, Smithfield Breast, Smithfield Bacon, Smithfield Jowls, Smithfield Smoked Sausage and Purest Smithfield Lard." Mr. R. S. Cox was manager of the firm.

An offer from Swift & Co. to buy V. W. Joyner & Co. was made and accepted midsummer of 1926. The first entry made in September 1926 Swift & Co. ledger was for \$150,000 interest paid on option in April 1926. Immediately the new owners set about upgrading the buildings with a new addition to the smoke house that made it twice its original width. An automatic sprinkler system was installed to prevent fires from destroying the buildings by 1929. Sidney Cox remained with the company until his death in 1935.

A Physical Survey was made of the complex in 1927 by S. W. Armistead of Norfolk. This drawing showed the twelve foot right of way on the right side of the Main Street lot. The home was still intact and the rear portion was almost full. The smokehouse was quite large and there were four other buildings. This is the only drawing that shows the division line for the front and rear lots.

In 1952 Swift and Company of Illinois declared itself sole owner and proprietor of V. W. Joyner and Company in the Partnership Book. In the 1970's small strips of land on Cedar Street were bought by the Town of Smithfield so that the street could be widened. Through several intercorporate transfers the Joyner company operated under their own name as a division of Swift and Company, a Corporation in Illinois; the Swift Independent Packing Company, a Delaware corporation, formerly named Transitory Food Processors, Inc.; and Swift and Co., a division of Esmark.

Throughout the years, Joyner's of Smithfield has cured its products in the traditional manner in the oldest commercial smokehouse in continuous use in America. The smokehouse and the Joyner Smithfield Ham Shop are located at 315 Main Street, Smithfield, Virginia.

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When the customers questioned the name change at the old Todd packing house, Mary E. and Nannie E. Todd sent a letter to a customer telling him that the hams were still being produced in the same way that their family had produced them for over a century. Mr. Spratley was a member of the family and he operated his business in their packing house with the help of Joe Tynes, an employee of E. M. Todd for thirty-five years. In truth, everything was exactly the same at the old packing house except the name was Tazewell T. Spratley.

The T. T. Spratley Company did well in the ham business for ten years until Mr. Spratley died on November 26, 1916. His will left all to his wife, Helen Todd Spratley, and appointed her executrix. No inventory was to be made of his estate and no mention was made of his business.

COX BROTHERS

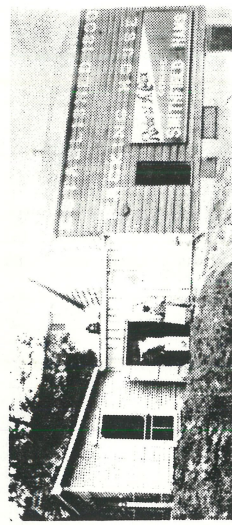
Mrs. Helen Spratley continued running the business in 1917, probably with the help of J. Wilber Cox. Mr. Cox then leased the T. T. Spratley Co. name and brands from Mrs. Spratley in November of 1919. A royalty of one cent per pound on all hams cured and sold was to be paid to Mrs. Spratley for their use. In an attempt to keep a quality control on the firm which carried her husband's name, a clause in the lease required that the brand of T. T. S. be used only on native grown stock.

ROBERT A. COX

The sudden death of the young J. Wilber Cox in 1920 left the business without a leader until Robert A. Cox, Wilber's brother, signed a similar lease with Mrs. Spratley. She must have been pleased with the agreement, because on October 17, 1921 she offered Robert A. Cox the opportunity to have absolute control of the business conducted under the name of Tazewell T. Spratley Co. with the T. T. S. brand and stencils and everything that belonged to the firm as long as he desired, for a flat fee of \$2,500 to be paid in yearly installments of \$300 to \$500 until all had been paid. At the same time, the Todd sisters, Mary E., Nannie S. and Diana M. Todd sold lot 1, which held the packing house, to Mr. Cox. The smokehouse remained on lot 2 with the family home and so the use of it was granted to Mr. Cox in the deed for lot 1 for his lifetime.

ROBERT A. COX COMPANY

In the *Smithfield Times* special edition of 1923, the ad for the T. T. Spratley Co., Proprietor, Robert A. Cox, stressed that they were the "packers and curers of genuine razor-back hams with absolutely nothing but native meat cured." Mr. Cox used the ad to solicit more green meat for his business with an address to "Mr. Farmer — We will pay the highest market price for your meat." In a later article Robert Cox was promoting the genuine razor-back peanut-fed hogs.



Robert A. Cox Company in the old Todd Packing House, 1925

The sign on the old packing house was changed to reflect the new owner. Where once it read "Established 1800 / Todd's Packing House" it now had the "Todd's" painted over and a new applied sign which covered a small window was added to the bottom. The side of the building now read as before "Established 1800 / Packing House" with the new sign added "Robert A. Cox Genuine Smithfield Hams."

Late in the twenty's Mr. Cox handed out a leaflet with his hams which gave cooking directions for Smithfield Ham. In the leaflet he stated that "This is the same quality ham that we have been curing and packing since 1921 under the name of Tazewell T. Spratley Co. and which we shall continue to pack under the name of ROBERT A. COX CO." Letterhead stationery from that period confirmed the fact that the Spratley name was no longer used.

Mr. Robert Cox became seriously ill in 1935. His recovery was slow and unsure for two years at which time he closed the packing house after conducting business there for fifteen years. The old Todd smokehouse and packing house were never again used for processing hams commercially. The old building had been in continuous use since 1779; a period of 157 years.

The Smithfield Packing Company, Inc. acquired lot 1 of the property where the packing house still stood on June 30, 1944, from Robert A. Cox and his wife, Elsie H. Cox. Sometime in the 1950's the old Todd/Spratley/Cox packing house was demolished. It was the end of an era on Wharf Hill.

SMITHFIELD HAM AND PRODUCTS COMPANY

James Cresap Sprigg, Jr. was born in Garrett Park, Maryland to James Cresap Sprigg and Grace Elizabeth Duryea Sprigg on November 17, 1898. After his military service in World War I, he studied at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville then found adventure as a mining engineer in Mexico for several years. Some of his fondest memories revolved around this period of time when he was mining and lived on a ranch in Texas. He met Pancho Villa while there.

On his return to Charlottesville, James Sprigg spoke with a friend who suggested they go into the ham business in Smithfield. His only contact with a Smithfield Ham up until this point was a Chapman Ham he had been sent while he was in Texas. The cook never did get the cooking process right and eventually the ham was given to the dog for his Christmas dinner. He had never tasted a Smithfield Ham, but he was an entrepreneur by nature and came to Smithfield to investigate the possibilities. The company that was for sale was The Smithfield Company, Incorporated, which was organized in 1922 by J. W. Richardson, A. C. Cromwell, D. M. Bell and Howard E. West, all from Norfolk. It had been run by Raymond Batten and Howard West. Though the business had folded, the accounts they sold to were impressive and promising. Mr. Sprigg made an offer of \$30 on the dollar and it was accepted. James C. Sprigg became owner in October 1925. Mr. Sprigg moved to Smithfield and lived in the two-room plant which was on nine acres just across the Pagan River and outside the town limits.



James C. Sprigg, Jr.

Smithfield hams take many months to cure so there was no inventory to begin his ham business. James Sprigg had an inventive mind and soon decided to purchase hams from the other companies and learn how to cook them properly and sell them cooked while he was waiting for his first hams to cure. After all, the problem he had with his ham in Texas occurred because he didn't understand how to cook it and he knew others probably had the same problem. After a little experimenting, James Sprigg determined the proper cooking method which had the least shrinkage and loss and then he began his sales efforts. The cooked hams were a high priced item because he bought them cured from the other companies and cooked them, so they had to be marketed to up-scale customers. He started his sales campaign with the New York social register, hotels and restaurants which would appreciate the convenience of a pre-cooked gourmet item and would be willing to pay the price. The company survived the first year and by the second had their own supply of hams to sell. This was 1926.

A law was introduced by the General Assembly of Virginia in 1926 that placed restrictions on the term "Smithfield" meats. This law came about just after James Sprigg purchased the Smithfield Company. A fear of inferior Smithfield products from the outsider who knew little of the ham industry, as well as the new competition, induced the local companies to have the Department of Agriculture submit the act which was approved in 1926. As the Smithfield Company was not within the town limits of Smithfield it had only two choices: move into town or discontinue the use of the name.

The company incorporated on November 6, 1926, with its principal officers listed as J. C. Sprigg, J. C. Sprigg, Jr., James Madison, Dr. William M. Sprigg of Washington D.C. and George F. Whitley. Dr. William M. Sprigg, James C. Sprigg, Jr.'s uncle, bought a piece of property on North Main Street at the town limits and sold it to the company, which brought the Smithfield Company into compliance when they set up a packing house there. James Sprigg was also required to use only locally-produced hogs from the peanut belt of Virginia and North Carolina, not Western or Southern meat. He was convicted of mis-branding when he fought the law and then converted to the exclusive use of peanut belt hogs to conform.

The third year of operation created a new set of problems. The hams that were cured that year were unbelievably hard. No one wanted to buy them. He sold one lot to the prison system at much reduced prices, but could not make another sale because the hams could not be chewed. In an effort to salvage the year's stock, he ground the ham, seasoned it and sealed it in jars. This was the first production of Amber Brand Deviled Smithfield Ham.



The Norcross-Bartlett Arctic Expedition of 1933 carried a supply of Amber Brand deviled Smithfield ham spread and raw hams on their schooner.

Mr. Sprigg's company listed its names with the Corporation Commission of Virginia as The Smithfield Ham Company, The Smithfield Ham Corporation and The Smithfield Ham and Products Corporation. The registered trademarks are "Uncle Amber" and "James River", product symbols we recognize today.

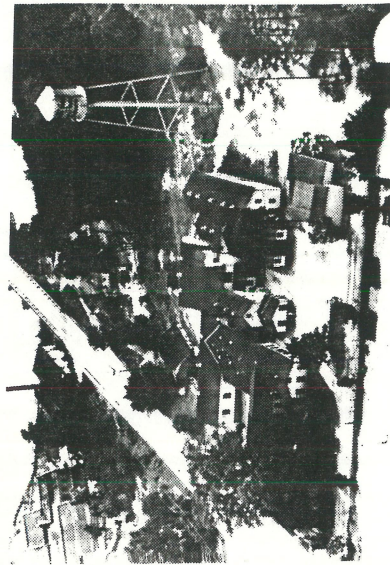
Throughout the thirties, Mr. Sprigg traveled and promoted his hams and ham products. He sold to coffee shops and drug store lunch counters. A sandwich made of deviled Smithfield ham could sell for more than the \$.10 regular ham sandwich. The product could also be used in combination with many other foods as a specialty. Part of his nation-wide promotion was in providing recipes to his customers. Eventually he began a collection of menus from restaurants which served Smithfield ham, James River and Amber Brand products. The menus come from the finest restaurants, trains and soda fountains all over the country and display the culinary genius at work with Smithfield Ham Products.

Several years after inventing Amber Brand Deviled Smithfield Ham, James Sprigg introduced James River Brand Smithfield Spread made from shoulders. Many companies were limited severely in their production of food products for civilian use during World War II due to the use of metal cans for packaging. Mr. Sprigg considered himself fortunate that he chose to use glass jars to can his meat spreads when he introduced them. The government used 20% of all the product he made in jars. If it had been in cans, the government may have taken it all. By 1944, the company had grown to fifty employees in the plant and about twenty salesmen who covered the Eastern half of the United States. There were twenty brokers throughout the Western half of the country. The annual payroll was \$125,000. The company also maintained an office in New York City.

Smithfield Ham and Products Co. was advertising nationally in such magazines as the *Saturday Evening Post*, *Good Housekeeping*, *The New York Times* and *Gourmet Magazine* in the forties. The annual bill for advertising exceeded \$100,000. The ads were of First Pig of Virginia (FPV). The expressive pig walked on two legs, wore a top hat and tails, and drank champagne with his canapés made of Amber Brand Deviled Smithfield Ham.



The mid 1940's brought expansion to the company. A new section for the automated filling of the jars of meat spread was added with a shipping room on the second floor. Several new products were going to be introduced in the future which would require pressure cooker canners and the canners were being installed in preparation for this. The four canners were six feet high and two machines for sealing the cans were nearby. Another building of 48' x 80' and three stories tall was added to provide five curing rooms and three refrigerated curing rooms and additional storing rooms for 75,000 hams and shoulders. The water tower that is so easily recognized now was constructed during this period of remodeling so that there would be a 70,000 gallon supply of water for the additional equipment and the sprinkler system for fire protection.



Smithfield Ham and Products Company, 1950's

The new products added to the line after the expansion were James River Smithfield Pork Barbecue, James River Smithfield Beef Barbecue, Barbecue Sauce, Pork and Gravy and Beef and Gravy. Of these, the pork barbecue was an instant success. Introduced in 1947, it showed net sales of \$440,907.45 for that year and was up to \$564,631.09 for 1948. Consumers were anxious for prepared tasty products. Many sales were to luncheon counters and, to increase sales, leaflets were provided showing portion size and number of portions per can. Electric warmers similar to our crock pots were provided to keep the barbecue ready to serve and ladles of portion size were a bonus. A more down-to-earth pig named "Smitty" (without clothes) danced on banner ads and paper hats. Smitty is still associated with the barbecue products.

James C. Sprigg continued to run the Smithfield Ham and Products Co., Inc. through the 1950's, 1960's and 1970's. The company grew and was profitable. In the early 1980's the plant employed sixty-five people, had a 40,000 square foot packing plant and a 4,000 square foot cold storage facility.

Mr. Sprigg was ready to retire when he was eighty-three years old and had been in the ham business fifty-five years. He sold the business in 1981 to Peter Pruden, III of Pruden Foods Inc. of Suffolk. Mr. Richard Fuller of Pruden Packing Co. was made President of the firm and Alton Gwaltney remained as Vice-President, a position he held under James Sprigg. Peter Pruden, III is chairman of the board.

The latest expansion to the Smithfield Ham and Products Co. Inc. is the acquisition of the V. W. Joyner Co., formerly a subsidiary of Swift and Co., a division of Esmark. In 1983 the company purchased Joyner's of Smithfield which also produces Smithfield Hams and operates a retail shop on Main Street in Smithfield.

A mail order business called The Smithfield Collection offers delectable gifts and fine smoked meats from Smithfield Ham and Products Co., Inc. As cooked hams and cooked ham products are the company's specialty, the prime item offered is an Amber Brand Smithfield Ham that is fully cooked and comes with bone in or boneless. Uncooked hams are also available. Amber Brand Sliced Smithfield Ham is sold in vacuum pack and there is an assortment of smoked bacon, sausage, turkey and other fowl. The old products from the James River Collection (Pork Barbecue, Beef Barbecue, Beef Stew and Barbecue Sauce) come in a gift box with the new James River Strawberry Preserves and Virginia Honey. The Smithfield Collection is an exotic taste of the fine foods that come from Smithfield Ham and Products Co., Inc.

On July 19, 1985, Mr. James Chesap Sprigg, Jr., founder of the company and the innovator of cooked Smithfield Ham products, was killed in an automobile accident at the age of ninety

SMITHFIELD PACKING COMPANY, INCORPORATED

Most people in and around Smithfield, when referring to Smithfield Packing Company, use the name "Luter's". Indeed, the Luter family has been the guiding force in the company (except for the period between 1970 and 1975) since the corporation was chartered in 1936.

THE LUTER FAMILY

Joseph W. Luter, Sr. was born on a farm near Ivor, Virginia, in 1879. His parents died when he was young and he was reared by his grandmother. At age 21, Joseph Luter began his career in meat-packing working for the P. D. Gwaltney, Jr. & Company Meat on Commerce Street, in Smithfield, Virginia. On May 31, 1908, a son, Joseph W. Luter, Jr. was born to Joseph, Sr. and his wife, the former Marie Britt of Smithfield. When his son was less than ten years old, the father, because of blindness, became dependent upon his son to enable him to carry out his sales job with Gwaltney Packing Company. Joseph Luter, Jr. began accompanying his father throughout the Tidewater area to visit the grocery stores where he sold Gwaltney products. These trips meant that Joseph, Jr. had to be absent from his school for days at a time. Even so, he graduated at the head of his class at Smithfield High School.

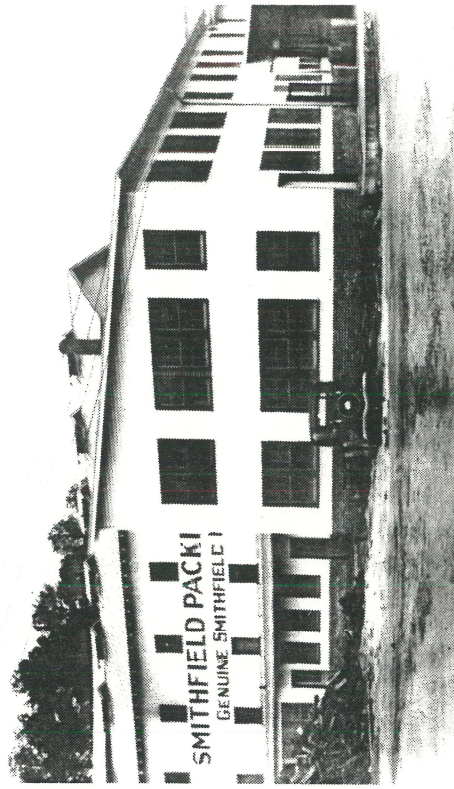
It was only natural, with his exposure to the meat packing industry, that Joseph Luter, Jr. would follow in his father's footsteps and go to work for P. D. Gwaltney, Jr. & Co. when he finished his schooling. He learned all phases of the operation and worked his way up to plant manager. Joseph Luter, Jr. was a very ambitious young man and he could see that there would be little room for him to advance in the Gwaltney family-owned business. He persuaded his father that they should start their own meat packing plant. He felt that there was an opportunity for a flexible, medium-sized regional plant to compete favorably against the giant mid-west pork producing firms.



Joseph W. Luter, Jr.

FAMILY BUSINESS

Smithfield Packing Company, Inc. was chartered on September 5, 1936. The officers of the company were: Joseph W. Luter, Sr., President; P. D. Pruden, Vice President; Joseph W. Luter, Jr., Secretary-Treasurer. The business was located in the wharf area in Smithfield, near the Gwaltney Meat Packing plant.



Smithfield Packing Company, Plant No. 1 on Commerce Street, 1937

The Luters started out as a three man operation — the two Luters and a truckdriver. Hogs were slaughtered on nearby farms and all work was done by hand. There was no government inspection. Under these conditions it was a problem to insure that the meat was fresh. But this became Luter's objective — ALWAYS A FRESH PRODUCT. Soon the Luters established a slaughter house in Suffolk to provide federally inspected meat for small packers such as Joyner and Pruden. Smithfield Packing Company was among the first of the meat packers to employ modern machinery which would give them an advantage in assuring the valued FRESH PRODUCT.

Not long after the company was started, Mr. Luter, Sr. suffered a stroke and the presidency of the company passed on to his son. However, Joseph W. Luter, Sr. remained as Chairman of the Board of Directors until his death in 1947.

PLANT EXPANSION

In 1946, Smithfield Packing Company opened a new plant just north of Smithfield, across the Pagan Creek bridge. The new plant had the ability to slaughter as many as 3,000 hogs daily. The modern plant could perform every process from killing hogs to modern packaging of products such as hot dogs and sausages. The only process not done was the curing of hams. This had to be done within the town limits of Smithfield to comply with the Virginia State law of 1926 regarding Smithfield Hams.



Smithfield Packing Company's parade float, 1946

In 1960, the annexation of property in Isle of Wight County by the Town of Smithfield put the town limits beyond the packing plants, north of the Pagan Creek on Route 10. This meant that genuine Smithfield Hams could now be cured at the location of the new plants. Smithfield Packing Company, however, continued to cure Smithfield Hams at Old Plant #2 on Commerce Street until it burned in June, 1990.

DECISION FORCED UPON LUTER FAMILY

In the spring of 1962, quite unexpectedly, Joseph W. Luter, Jr. died of a heart attack. He was only 53 years of age. His son, Joseph Luter, III, was a senior at Wake Forest College, in North Carolina. Up to this point, young Joe Luter had not determined that he wanted to get into the family meat packing business. He was familiar with the meat packing industry because he had worked at the plant when he was in high school and college. His plan was to attend law school after graduation from college. When his father died, Joe Luter, III had to decide quickly whether or not he wanted to get into the family business. If he did not want to, the business would be sold. Fortunately for the company, he elected to start his career with the Smithfield Packing Company and he became a salesman when he completed college in 1962.

The Luter family held 46% of the stock in Smithfield Packing Company. In 1965, Joseph Luter, III learned that 6% of the stock in the company had been put up for sale by an unrelated shareholder and he managed to purchase this stock. This gave his family a controlling interest in the company — a goal he had in mind for some time. In 1966, at age 26, Joseph Luter, III became president of Smithfield Packing Company. He immediately set about expanding the capacity of the plant. He added space and equipment to the existing plant and enlarged the sales force. In a year he had expanded to the point they could handle 5,000 hogs per day. By producing more pork products and having a larger sales force to market the product, Smithfield Packing Company was able to corner a larger share of the market.

BUY-OUT

The success of the company did not go unnoticed. A holding company, Liberty Equities Corporation of Washington, D.C., noticed. In 1969, they made an offer which seemed too good to turn down. They would buy Smithfield Packing Company from the Luters for \$20 million in cash. Joseph Luter, III deemed the unsolicited offer too good to refuse and so he sold out on July 1, 1969. Mr. Luter remained as president. Meanwhile, the Securities and Exchange Commission was investigating Liberty Equities for questionable financial deals. Trading in Liberty's Stock was halted. The value of stock dropped from \$12/share in July 1969 to \$1/share six months later. Luter was fired as president of Smithfield Packing Company. The young multi-millionaire went on the buy and develop Bryce's Mountain Resort at Bayse, Virginia.

SMITHFIELD FOODS, INCORPORATED

In 1971, the name of Liberty Equities was changed to SMITHFIELD FOODS, INC. This change was to give the company a new image and to recognize that Smithfield Packing Company, Inc. was the chief money-maker in the conglomerate. Lattie Upchurch, Jr. was named president and the headquarters were moved from Washington D.C. to Newport News, Virginia. The company was enjoying restored confidence and the financial picture improved due to lower hog prices which boosted sales. Stock prices had risen to \$12 per share. The new success did not last. Because of a number of financial problems, among them the increasing cost of pork production, Smithfield Packing Company began losing money. The parent company, Smithfield Foods, Inc., had to sell off two of its subsidiaries in July 1974 in order to pay a \$10 million note due the Luter family from their sale in 1969. In 1975, the bank was threatening to recall a \$10 million loan to Smithfield Foods unless the top management was changed.

LUTER IS BACK

It seemed clear that Smithfield Packing was headed for bankruptcy. The company had experienced an \$8 million loss for fiscal 1974. A change was urgent. Joseph Luter, III, out of concern for his father's business and for the community it supported, started approaching Smithfield Foods board members about the need for a change in management. He offered to return to the company which he felt was a sound business whose products were widely accepted.

In April 1975, Joseph W. Luter, III at age 35, was named President and C.E.O. of Smithfield Foods. George E. Hamilton, Jr. continued as president of Smithfield Packing Company. The new president of Smithfield Foods, Inc. immediately concentrated on cutting costs. He could see that the basic problems were bloated overhead and an overabundance of middle managers. He had confidence in his ability to turn the company around and his confidence was well founded. The first month after his return, the company turned a profit!

One cost-cutting measure was to move the headquarters for Smithfield Foods, Inc. from its posh office in Newport News to Smithfield Packing Company, Inc. in Smithfield. By 1975, the company was in such a bad financial state that it had to halt the advertising of its meat products sold throughout the Atlantic Coastal region. By 1978, the advertising budget was well over \$800,000. The next year it had risen to well over \$1 million. Smithfield Packing Company, Inc. was concentrating on processed meats rather than on fresh pork as this was more profitable. During this period, the company had developed and market-tested a new product, "ham sausage". This was an entirely new pork product which was unusual in the meat business. The product was well accepted.

EXPANSION

Smithfield Foods, Inc. had only two subsidiaries, Smithfield Packing Company and the Fish House Restaurant chain. Mr. Luter decided to sell the restaurants even though they were doing well. He wanted to concentrate his efforts on the meat-packing industry which he knew so well. In 1978, the restaurants were sold for \$7.75 million, and the money was used to retire debt and to expand. In 1978, two plants were acquired, one of which was in Kinston, North Carolina. It has been owned formerly by Frosty Morn Meats, Incorporated. The plant was purchased for \$1.7 million. The Kinston plant produced boneless hams, smoked hams and picnics. Smithfield Foods, Inc. acquired a 12-year lease of a facility in Norfolk. In 1979, the company acquired two plants in Norfolk.

A big move came in 1981. Gwaltney, Inc., where Mr. Luter, Sr. and his son had gotten their start, had been sold in 1970 to Continental Baking Co., a subsidiary of International Telephone and Telegraph. Mr. Luter, III felt that a meat packing business, with all the uncontrollable and unpredictable fluctuations in costs of raising pork, was not well suited to a highly structured company such as I.T.T. Believing that I.T.T. was not happy with this unpredictability, Mr. Luter made an offer to buy I.T.T. Gwaltney for \$33 million. His offer was accepted, and on October 27, 1981, I.T.T. Gwaltney became a subsidiary of Smithfield Foods, Inc. This acquisition made Mr. Luter's company the largest meat packer in the nation. There were 1500 people employed at Gwaltney's in Smithfield, Portsmouth and Salisbury, North Carolina. Smithfield Packing Company employed 1300 people in Smithfield, Norfolk, Suffolk and Kinston, North Carolina.

Smithfield Packing Company and Gwaltney's competed with each other as much as they always had. In order to remove himself from the two companies and to gain better access to legal and accounting expertise, Mr. Luter moved the headquarters of Smithfield Foods to Arlington, Virginia.

Between 1980 and 1982, the price of hogs went from \$.29 a pound to \$.65 per pound. The nation's meat consumption patterns were changing to eating more chicken and less beef and pork. The average American, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, ate 68.3 pounds of pork in 1980 compared to 59 pounds in 1982. Every pork producer felt the pressure. Despite the adverse market, Smithfield Foods continued to make strides. In 1984, they purchased Patrick Cudahy (Wisconsin), Inc. for \$29 million. This company was slightly larger than either Gwaltney or Smithfield Packing. They produced canned hams, dry sausage salami, motadella, pepperoni and other processed meats but no hot dogs or luncheon meats. The addition of the Cudahy plant brought new products as well as extended markets. Before this time, only Smithfield Hams were shipped west of the Allegheny Mountains.

In fiscal year 1984, Smithfield Foods, Inc. yielded \$541.6 million in sales and net profit of \$2.4 million. These figures were high enough to elevate the company to the Fortune 500 category with a rank of 422nd. In Smithfield, 16,000 hogs were slaughtered daily at Smithfield Packing and Gwaltney's and there were 3,500 people employed by Smithfield Foods.

One of the companies which had been hardest hit by the rise in the cost of hogs together with the tight market was Schlusserberg-Kurdle Company at Baltimore, producer of Esskay brand meats. In 1985, Smithfield Foods bought the ailing company for \$1.9 million. One of the benefits of acquiring this company was that it had a complete line of deli meats and the name Esskay was well known and had a loyal consumer following which it brought to Smithfield Foods.

In keeping with the trend toward eating less fat, Smithfield Packing Company introduced the Hamilton's Easy Karv Ham which depicts the company president, George E. Hamilton, Jr., on the wrapper. This variety of ham and the Deli Ham line have lower fat and sodium content.

HOG FARMS

By 1988 there was a regional shortage of hogs and shipping hogs from the midwest was expensive. The cost of transportation was considerable and to add to this the hogs lost weight in transit. To address this problem, Carroll Farms of Warsaw, North Carolina, and Smithfield Foods, Inc. entered into a joint venture. They would build hog farms in areas close to the slaughter houses. Each facility would be built to produce 20,000 hogs yearly. Five facilities were planned which would mean Carroll Farms could produce 100,000 hogs annually. In Eastern Virginia and North Carolina, over 2 million hogs are needed to supply the market demands. By 1992 only 4% to 5% of the hogs processed locally came from the midwest, whereas five years before 35% had been shipped in. The reduction in shipping cost resulted in lower cost hogs for the packing plants.

FIRE BRINGS END TO ERA

Fire is always a dreaded event where wooden buildings are concerned. In June of 1990, a serious fire struck the Smithfield Packing Company's "Old Plant #2". This plant was on Commerce Street and was the original plant built by Luter in the 1930's. The building was being used as the smokehouse for Jamestown and Smithfield Brand hams. The fire destroyed 23,000 hams that were being cured for the Thanksgiving and Christmas season. The building was later demolished, thus ending the ham operation on Commerce Street.

STILL GROWING

In 1991, Smithfield Foods, Inc. earned a record \$28.66 million and sold more than 602 million pounds of ham, franks and processed meat plus 499 million pounds of fresh pork. The company employed 4100 workers. The company is still growing. Smithfield Foods, Inc. purchased Mash's a sausage company of Landover, Maryland.

In order to keep ahead in the production of leaner hogs, Mr. Luter has brought a new breed of hog from England. This hog, the Manor Ranger, is being flown over from England and raised on breeding farms in North Carolina. The cost of each of these hogs is from \$1000 to \$2500 compared to \$125 for the variety row slaughtered. It will take several years to build up the stock to the point that they will be slaughtered. The British hog is 62% lean, compared to 52% for the American hog generally slaughtered. Bacon for the Manor Ranger is 70% lean compared to 45% for the American varieties.

The biggest investment that Smithfield Foods, Inc. has ever made was the construction of a plant in Bladen County, North Carolina. The plant which opened in October 1992, cost \$60 million. This plant can process 12,000 hogs per day.

In early 1993, Smithfield Foods, Inc. completed an expansion of their Gwaltney plant which began in 1992.

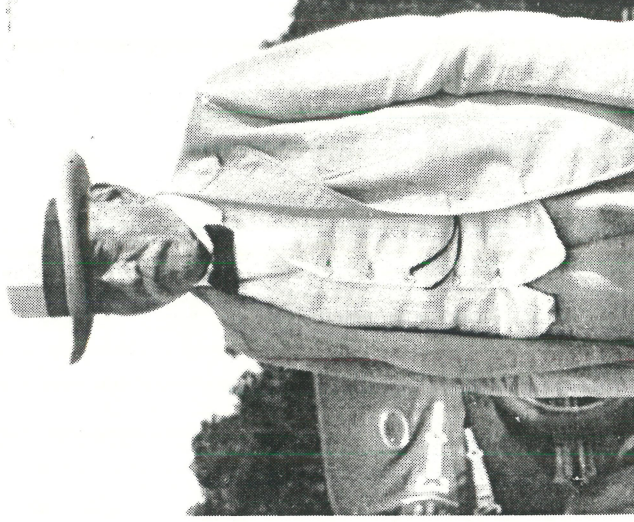
Mr. Joseph Luter, III is a man of ideas. He has envisioned the development of the waterfront along Pagan Creek. His plan would combine an executive office building for Smithfield Foods, Inc., along with shops, marina, condominiums and a museum. He employed an architectural firm to study and develop such a plan which was given to the Smithfield Town Council for study and approval. The Town Council expressed a sincere interest in pursuing this development which would be a tourist attraction as well as an area for local citizens to enjoy.

OTHER INDEPENDENT HAM COMPANIES

In the search for local history of the ham companies, be aware that many were established, but only a few have survived. The first ham industry sprang from privately owned smokehouses both on farms and in the town. It was additional income to sell or trade the smoked meat. Around 1900 general stores were selling their own smoked meat and that of local residents. From this beginning, some companies were formed, but unless they left behind a partnership, certificate of incorporation or advertising, it is impossible to trace all of these companies and some have surely been missed.

CHAPMAN & COMPANY

The earliest of the companies no longer in existence seems to have been Chapman & Company, Smithfield, Virginia. Mr. Benjamin P. Chapman had a general store and cured ham on Commerce Street next to the Gwaltney mercantile. By the late twenties, his sons were running the ham business. The name was B. P. Chapman Co. and Sons. An advertisement in a supplement to the *Virginia Gazette* about 1926 shows the smokehouses and photos of James T. Chapman and L. L. Chapman, sons of Benjamin P., and states that "Chapman Genuine Smithfield hams have been smoked and cured for nearly half a century" which would put the origin of the business in the 1880's. The office building and warehouse were on Commerce Street while several smokehouses were on the lower side of the hill just behind the family home on the corner of Church Street and what is now Cedar Street. Cedar Street was not cut through at the time. One year during the depression the company packed the hams too tight while curing and they all spoiled. The loss of so much inventory, coupled with the depression, closed the business in 1931.



Benjamin P. Chapman, c. 1920

SMITHFIELD MINCED HAM CORPORATION

On May 15, 1936, James T. Chapman, formerly of Chapman & Company, applied for a certificate of incorporation under the name of Smithfield Minced Ham Corporation. The corporation wished "to buy, sell and deal in, manufacture, prepare, cure, pack, and merchandise Smithfield Hams, minced ham, and all manner of pork and other meat products." One goal was to "acquire formulae, patents and secret processes" for same. Mr. James T. Chapman served as president, F. P. Chapman was vice-president and E. M. Chapman was secretary. This charter was annulled on June 1, 1951, by the State Corporation Commission.

THE SMITHFIELD HAM CORPORATION

The Smithfield Ham Corporation was formed in November of 1910 by John G. Wilson who was its president and treasurer. C. J. Clark was vice-president and George W. Watson was secretary and manager. The only evidence of the company's existence other than its incorporation notice is a piece of note paper dated Jan. 24th 1910, which advertises "The Meat for Epicures; Smithfield hams, shoulders, breast and breakfast bacon." The owner, John G. Wilson, had a general store on Main and Commerce Streets and lived on lot 46 in Smithfield. He died in 1915, which may be why the company folded. There is no indication as to the length of time the company survived.

THE VIRGINIA HAM CO., INC.

From a special edition of the *Smithfield Times* around 1923 there was an article about the Virginia Ham Co., Inc. The company was the packer and distributor of "Ole Virginia's Choicest Smithfield Hams." Mr. Jack Grimes was the manager of the concern while Mr. Raymond Batten was the president.

THE POCAHONTAS PACKING CORP.

The Pocahontas Packing Corp. applied for its certificate of incorporation on March 4, 1926. They planned to conduct an abattoir and packing plant for the preparation of beef, pork and lamb as well as manufacture fertilizer, prepare hides and sell fruits and vegetables. The president of the company was Porter Hardy Jr., J. M. Batten was vice-president, F. G. Hardy was secretary and treasurer.



REFERENCE SOURCES for the material contained herein:

- * Isle of Wight County Museum Collection files
- * Isle of Wight County records available at the Courthouse
- * Personal accounts by family members

RESEARCH INFORMATION COMPILED AND WRITTEN BY:

MARION G. EVERETT, Registrar of the Isle of Wight County Museum. Mrs. Everett first came to work at the Museum seven years ago as a volunteer. A native of Norfolk, Virginia, she has been a resident of Isle of Wight County for 17 years. A graduate of Maury High School, she attended Tidewater Community College. In addition to her duties of registrar and assisting in historical research for the Museum, she is also the Museum photographer and is in charge of the photo lab.

and

PATSY D. BARHAM, Volunteer at the Isle of Wight County Museum for three years. Mrs. Barham, a native of Homeville in Sussex County, has been an Isle of Wight resident for four years. She is a graduate of Longwood College and taught school on the Peninsula for many years. She has performed as a volunteer in many capacities at the Museum, including coordinator for the newly established Museum Gift Shop.

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COMPLIMENTS OF:

**HAM CAPITAL
OF THE WORLD**

**PEPPER
COATED**

100% DRY CURED

**COOKING INSTRUCTIONS-
SMITHFIELD HAM**

Wash ham thoroughly and soak overnight in water. If a milder ham is desired, you may increase soak time to 24 hours or longer. Place ham skin down in vessel with sufficient water to cover. Bring water to 180°F. (not quite simmering), then cook to 160°F. internal temperature or about 25 minutes for each pound. Add water as needed to keep ham covered. When done, take ham from vessel and remove skin while warm. Sprinkle with brown sugar and bread crumbs and bake in oven until brown (approximately 15 minutes).

An alternate method not requiring a large vessel follows:

1. Soak ham 24 hours or longer as desired.
2. Wash thoroughly.
3. Wrap in heavy duty aluminum foil joining the edges carefully and forming a vessel with the bottom layer. Add 5 cups of water within the foil and place in oven with a tray or shallow pan underneath for support.
4. Cook by the following method: (Start timing when oven reaches 400°)
 - a. 400° for 20 minutes.
 - b. turn off oven for 3 hours
 - c. 400° for 20 minutes
 - d. turn off oven and let ham remain for 6-8 hours or longer (overnight is satisfactory)

**IMPORTANT- DO NOT OPEN OVEN DOOR UNTIL THE
COOK CYCLE IS COMPLETE, IN-
CLUDING THE LAST 6-8 HOURS**

Do not cut ham before cooking, but cook whole. This keeps the juices in. Slices from cooked ham can be fried or broiled.

Always begin slicing from the small end. Slant knife about 45° and cut to the bone. Slice very thin slices in order to obtain the unique Smithfield flavor.

Photographs by Franke Wood, Jr.

Designed by
Smithfield Chamber of Commerce

SMITHFIELD

GENUINE



**SMITHFIELD
HAM**

VIRGINIA



Yacht Basin - 30 Ton Hoist



Boating

ach



Old St. Luke's Church - 1632



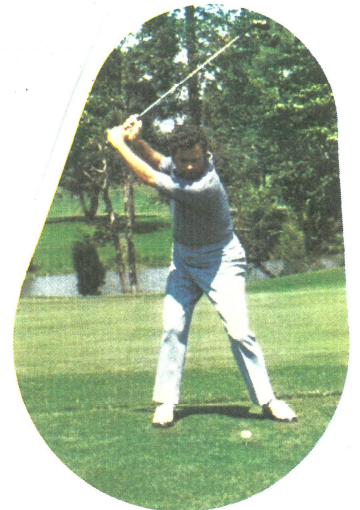
Recreational Facilities



Yacht Basin - 30 Ton Hoist



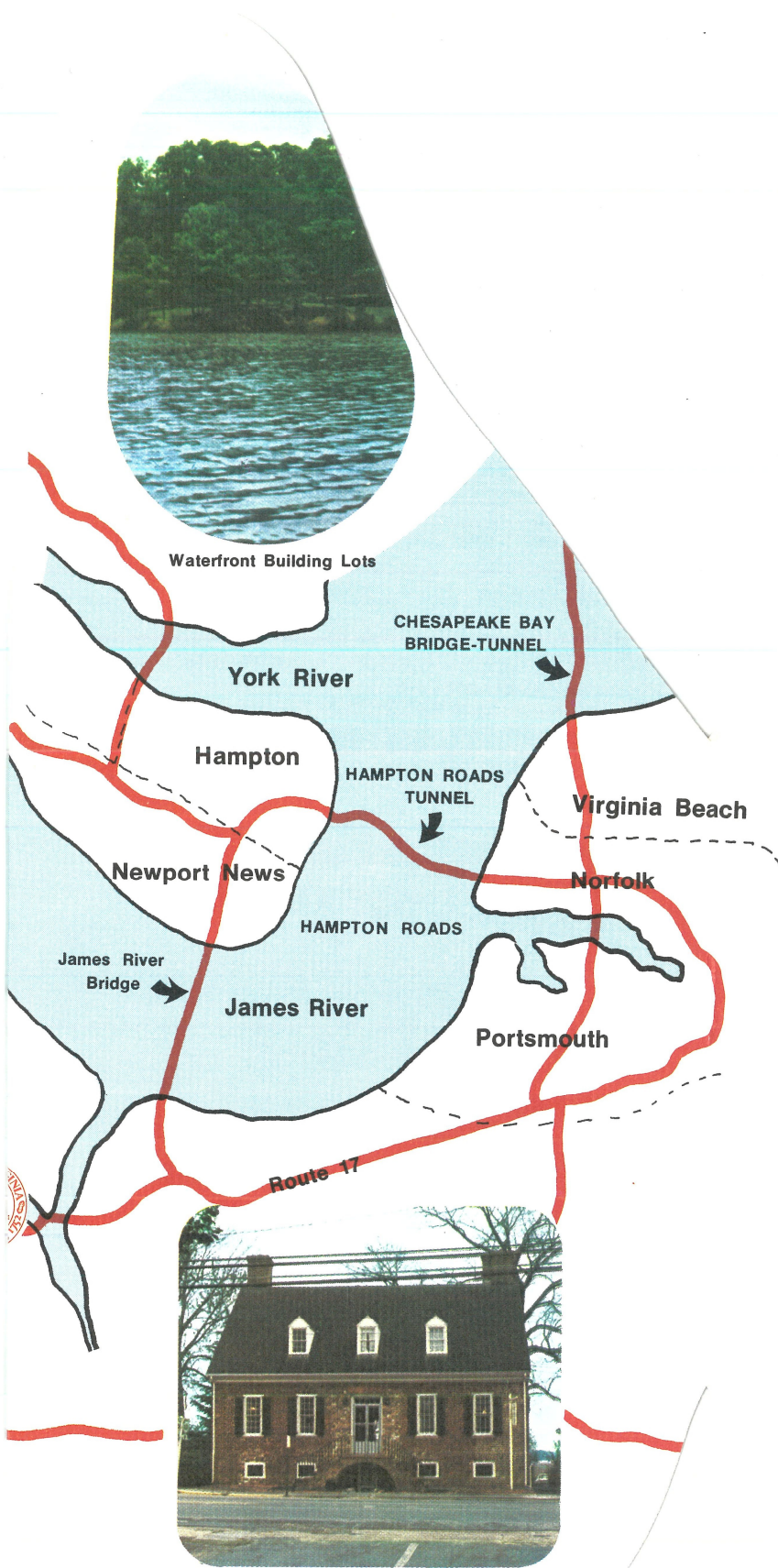
Old St. Luke's Church - 1632



Golfing



Old Court House - 1750



Boating



Recreational Facilities